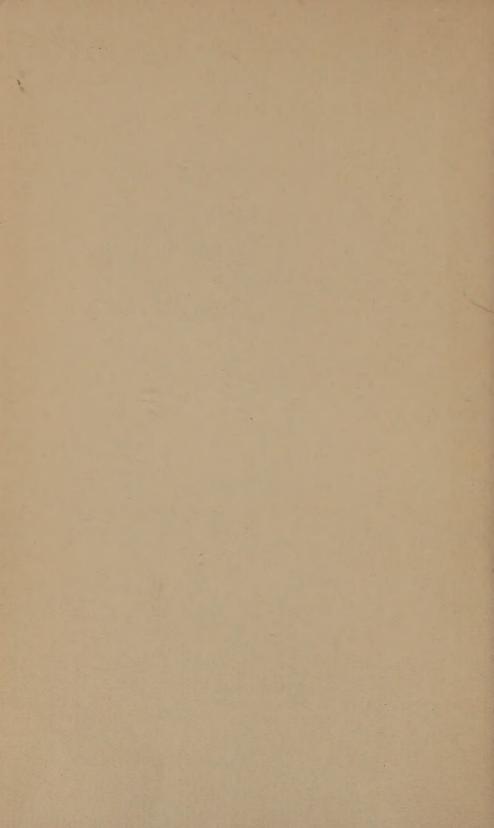


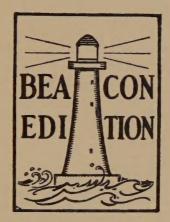
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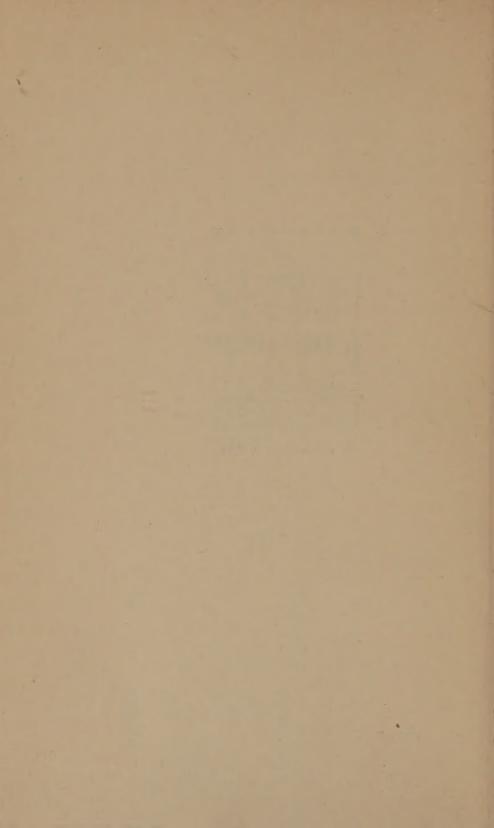








Volume VIII







SUE SAW THE CHANGE IN HIS MANNER.

THENOVELS, STORIES AND SKETCHES OF F. HOPKINSON SMITH

THE FORTUNES OF OLIVER HORN

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS * NEW YORK *1902

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I dedicate this book to the memory of "the man of all others about Kennedy Square most beloved, and the man of all others least understood — Richard Horn, the distinguished inventor."

F. H. S.



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VOL. I



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THE OLD HOUSE IN KENNEDY SQUARE

ENNEDY SQUARE, in the late fifties, was a place of birds and trees and flowers; of rude stone benches, sagging arbors smothered in vines, and cool dirt-paths bordered by sweet-smelling box. Giant magnolias filled the air with their fragrance, and climbing roses played hide-and-seek among the railings of the rotting fence. Along the shaded walks laughing boys and girls romped all day, with hoop and ball, attended by old black mammies in white aprons and gayly colored bandanas; while in the more secluded corners, sheltered by protecting shrubs, happy lovers sat and talked. tired wayfarers rested with hats off, and staid old gentlemen read by the hour, their noses in their books.

Outside of all this color, perfume, and old-

time charm, outside the grass-line and the rickety wooden fence that framed them in, ran an uneven pavement splashed with cool shadows and stained with green mould. Here in summer the watermelon man stopped his cart; and here in winter, upon its broken bricks, old Moses unhooked his bucket of oysters and ceased for a moment his droning call.

On the shady side of the square, and half hidden in ivy, was a Noah's Ark church, topped by a quaint belfry holding a bell that had not rung for years, and faced by a clock-dial all weather stains and cracks, around which travelled a single rusty hand. In its shadow to the right lay the home of the archdeacon, a stately mansion with Corinthian columns reaching to the roof and surrounded by a spacious garden filled with damask roses and bushes of sweet syringa. To the left crouched a row of dingy houses built of brick, their iron balconies hung in flowering vines, the windows glistening with panes of wavy glass purpled by age.

On the sunny side of the square, opposite the church, were more houses, high and low; one all garden, filled with broken-nosed statues hiding behind still more magnolias, and another all veranda and honeysuckle, big rocking-chairs and swinging hammocks; and still others with

porticos curtained by white jasmine or Virginia creeper.

Halfway down this stretch of sunshine and what a lovely stretch it was! - there had stood for years a venerable mansion with high chimneys, sloping roof, and quaint dormer windows, shaded by a tall sycamore that spread its branches far across the street. Two white marble steps guarded by old-fashioned iron railings led up to the front door, which bore on its face a silver-plated knocker, inscribed in letters of black with the name of its owner, "Richard Horn." All three, the door, the white marble steps, and the silver-plated knocker - not to forget the round silver knobs ornamenting the newel posts of the railings — were kept as bright as the rest of the family plate by that most loyal of servants, old Malachi, who daily soused the steps with soap and water, and then brought to a phenomenal polish the knocker, bell-pull, and knobs by means of fuller's earth, turpentine, hard breathing, and the vigorous use of a buckskin rag.

If this weazened-faced, bald-headed old darky, resplendent in white shirt-sleeves, green baize apron, and never-ceasing smile of welcome, happened to be engaged in this cleansing and polishing process — and it occurred every morning

— and saw any friend of his master approaching, he would begin removing his pail and brushes, and, throwing wide the white door before the visitor reached the house, would there await his coming, bent double in profound salutation. Indeed, whenever Malachi had charge of the front steps he seldom stood upright, so constantly was he occupied, by reason of his master's large acquaintance, in either crooking his back in the beginning of a bow, or straightening it up in the ending of one.

To one and all inquiries for Mr. Horn his answer during the morning hours was invariably the same,—

"Yes, sah, Marse Richard's in his li'l room wrastlin' wid his machine, I reckon. He's in dar now, sah,"—this with another low bow, and then slowly recovering his perpendicular with eyes fixed on the retreating figure, so as to be sure there was no further need of his services, he would resume his work, drenching the steps again with soap-suds or rubbing away on the door-plate or door-pull, stopping every other moment to blow his breath on the polished surface.

When, however, some one asked for young Oliver, the inventor's only son, the reply was by no means so definite, although the smile

was a trifle broader and the bow, if anything, a little more profound.

"Marse Oliver, did you say, sah? Dat's a difficult question, sah. 'Fo' Gawd I ain't seen him since breakfas'. You might look into Jedge Ellicott's office if you is gwine down town, whar dey do say he's studyin' law, an' if he ain't dar — an' I reckon he ain't — den you might drap in on Mister Crocker, whar Marse Oliver's paintin' dem pictures; an' if he ain't dar, den fo-sho he's wid some o' de young ladies, but which one de Lawd only knows. Marse Oliver's like the rabbit, sah, — he don't leab no tracks," and Malachi would hold his sides in a chuckle of so suffocating a nature that it would have developed into apoplexy in a less wrinkled and emaciated person.

Inside of the front door of this venerable mansion ran a wide hall, bare of everything but a solid mahogany hat-rack and table with glass mirror and heavy haircloth settee, over which, suspended from the ceiling, hung a curious eight-sided lantern, its wick replaced with a modern gas-burner. Above were the bedrooms, reached by a curved staircase guarded by spindling mahogany banisters with slender hand-rail, — a staircase so pure in style and of so distinguished an air that only maidens in gowns and slippers

should have tripped down its steps, and only cavaliers in silk stockings and perukes have waited below for their hands.

Level with the bare hall opened two highly polished mahogany doors, which led respectively into the drawing-room and library, their windows draped in red damask and their walls covered with family portraits. All about these rooms stood sofas studded with brass nails, big easy-chairs upholstered in damask, and small tables piled high with magazines and papers. Here and there, between the windows, towered a bookcase crammed with well-bound volumes reaching clear to the ceiling. In the centre of each room was a broad mantel sheltering an open fireplace, and on cold days - and there were some pretty cold days about Kennedy Square—two roaring wood fires dispensed comfort, the welcoming blaze of each reflected in the shining brass fire-irons and fenders.

Adjoining the library was the dining-room, with its well rubbed mahogany table, straight-backed chairs, and old sideboard laden with family silver, besides a much-coveted mahogany cellaret containing some of that very rare madeira for which the host was famous. Here were more easy-chairs and more portraits — one of Major Horn, who fell at Yorktown, in cocked

hat and epaulettes, and two others in mob-caps and ruffles — both ancient grandmothers of long ago.

The "li'l room ob Marse Richard," to which in the morning Malachi directed all his master's visitors, was in an old-fashioned one-story outhouse, with a sloping roof, that nestled under the shade of a big tulip-tree in the back vard - a cool, damp, brick-paved old yard, shut in between high walls mantled with ivy and Virginia creeper and capped by rows of broken bottles sunk in mortar. This outbuilding had once served as servants' quarters, and it still had the open fireplace and broad hearth before which many a black mammy had toasted the toes of her pickaninnies, as well as the trapdoor in the ceiling leading to the loft where they had slept. Two windows which peered out from under bushy eyebrows of tangled honeysuckle gave the only light; a greenpainted wooden door, which swung level with the moist bricks, the only entrance.

It was at this green-painted wooden door that you would have had to knock to find the man of all others about Kennedy Square most beloved, and the man of all others least understood, — Richard Horn, the distinguished inventor.

Perhaps at the first rap he would have been

too absorbed to hear you. He would have been bending over his carpenter bench, his deep, thoughtful eyes fixed on a drawing spread out before him, the shavings pushed back to give him room, a pair of compasses held between his fingers. Or he might have been raking the coals of his forge, set up in the same fireplace that had warmed the toes of the pickaninnies, his long red calico working gown, which clung about his spare body, tucked between his knees to keep it from the blaze. Or he might have been stirring a pot of glue — a wooden model in his hand - or hammering away on some bit of hot iron, the brown paper cap that hid his sparse gray locks pushed down over his broad forehead to protect it from the heat.

When, however, his ear had caught the tap of your knuckles and he had thrown wide the green door, what a welcome would have awaited you! How warm the grasp of his fine old hand; how cordial his greeting.

"Disturb me, my dear sir," he would have said in answer to your apologies, "that's what I was put in the world for. I love to be disturbed. Please do it every day. Come in! Come in! It's delightful to get hold of your hand."

If you were his friend, and most men who knew him were, he would have slipped his arm through your own, and after a brief moment you would have found yourself poring over a detailed plan, his arm still in yours, while he showed you the outline of some pin or lever needed to perfect the most marvellous of all discoveries of modern times — his new galvanic motor.

If it were your first visit, and he had touched in you some sympathetic chord, he would have uncovered a nondescript combination of glass jars, horseshoe magnets, and copper wires which lay in a curious-shaped box beneath one of the windows, and in a voice trembling with emotion as he spoke, he would have explained to you the value of this or that lever, and its necessary relation to this new invention of his which was so soon to revolutionize the motive power of the world. Or he would perhaps have talked to you as he did to me, of his theories and beliefs, and of what he felt sure the future would bring forth.

"The days of steam power are already numbered. I may not live to see it, but you will. This new force is almost within my grasp. I know people laugh, but so they have always done. All inventors who have benefited man-

kind have first been received with ridicule. I can expect no better treatment. But I have no fear of the result. The steady destruction of our forests and the eating up of our coal-fields must throw us back on chemistry for our working power. There is only one solution of this problem: it lies in the employment of a force which this machine will compel to our uses. I have not perfected the apparatus yet, as you see, but it is only a question of time. To-morrow, perhaps, or next week, or next year - but it will surely come. See what Charles Bright and this Mr. Cyrus Field are accomplishing! If it astonishes you to realize that we will soon talk to each other across the ocean, why should the supplanting of steam by a new energy seem so extraordinary? The problems which they have worked out along the lines of electricity, I am trying to work out along the lines of galvanism. Both will ultimately benefit the human race."

And while he talked you would have listened with your eyes and ears wide open, and your heart too, and believed every word he said, no matter how practical you might have been or how unwilling at first to be convinced.

On another day, perhaps, you might have chanced to knock at his door when some seri-

ous complication had vexed him, - a day when the cogs and pulleys upon which he had depended for certain demonstration had become so tangled up in his busy brain that he had thoughts for nothing else. Then, had he pushed back his green door to receive you, his greeting might have been as cordial and his welcome as hearty, but before long you would have found his eyes gazing into vacancy, or he would have stopped halfway in an answer to your question, his thoughts far away. Had you loved him you would then have closed the green door behind you and left him alone. Had you remained you would perhaps have seen him spring from his seat and pick up from his work bench some unfinished fragment. This he would have plunged into the smouldering embers of his forge and, entirely forgetful of your presence, would have seized the handle of the bellows, his eyes intent on the blaze, his lips muttering broken sentences. At these moments, as he would peer into the curling smoke, one thin hand upraised, the long calico gown wrinkling about his spare body, the paper cap on his head, he would have looked like some alchemist of old, or weird necromancer weaving a mystic spell. Sometimes, as you watched his face, with the glow of the coals lighting up his earnest eyes, there would

have flashed across his troubled features, as heat lightning illumines a cloud, some sudden brightness from within, followed by a quick smile of triumph. The rebellious fragment had been mastered. For the hundredth time the great motor was a success !

And yet, had this very pin or crank or cog, on which he had set such store, refused the next hour or day or week to do its work, no trace of his disappointment would have been found in his face or speech. His faith was always supreme; his belief in his ideals unshaken. If the pin or crank would not answer, the lever or pulley would. It was the "adjustment" that was at fault, not the principle. And so the dear old man would work on, week after week, only to abandon his results again, and with equal cheerfulness and enthusiasm to begin upon another appliance totally unlike any other he had tried before. "It was only a milestone," he would say; "every one that I pass brings me so much nearer the end."

If you had been only a stranger, some savant, for instance, who wanted a problem in mechanics solved, or a professor, blinded by the dazzling light of the almost daily discoveries of the time, in search of mental ammunition to fire back at curious students daily bombarding you

with puzzling questions; or had you been a thrifty capitalist, holding back a first payment until an expert like Richard Horn had passed upon the merits of some new labor-saving device of the day,—had you been any one of these, and you might very easily have been, for such persons came almost daily to see him, the inventor would not only have listened to your wants, no matter how absorbed he might have been in his own work, but he would not have allowed you to leave him until he was sure that your mind was at rest.

Had you, however, been neither friend nor client, but some unbeliever fresh from the gossip of the club, where many of the habitués not only laughed at the inventor's predictions for the future, but often lost their tempers in discussing his revolutionary ideas; or had you, in a spirit of temerity, entered his room armed with arguments for his overthrow, nothing that your good breeding or the lack of it would have permitted you to have said could have ruffled his gentle spirit. With the tact of a man of wide experience among men, he would have turned the talk into another channel, -music, perhaps, or some topic of the day, - and all with such exquisite grace that you would have forgotten the subject you came to discuss until you found

yourself outside the yard and halfway across Kennedy Square before realizing that the inventor had made no reply to your attacks.

But whoever you might have been, whether the friend of years, the anxious client, or the trifling unbeliever, and whatever the purpose of your visit, whether to shake his hand again for the very delight of touching it, to seek advice, or to combat his theories, you would have carried away the impression of a man whose like you had never met before, - a man who spoke in a low, gentle voice, and yet with an authority that compelled attention; enthusiastic over the things he loved, silent over those that pained him; a scholar of wide learning, yet skilled in the use of tools that obeyed him as readily as nimble fingers do a hand; a philosopher eminently sane on most of the accepted theories of the day, and yet equally insistent in his support of many of the supposed sophistries and socalled "fanaticisms of the hour;" an old-time aristocrat holding fast to the class distinctions of his ancestors and yet glorying in the dignity of personal labor; a patriot loyal to the traditions of his State, and yet so opposed to the bondage of men and women that he had freed his own slaves the day his father's will was read; a cavalier reverencing a woman as sweet-

heart, wife, and mother, and yet longing for the time to come when she, too, could make a career, then denied her, coequal in its dignity with that of the man beside her.

A composite personality of strange contradictions, of pronounced accomplishments and yet of equally pronounced failures. And yet, withal, a man so gracious in speech, so courtly in bearing, so helpful in counsel, so rational, human, and lovable, that agree with him or not, as you pleased, his vision would have lingered with you for days.

When night came the inventor would rake the coals from the forge, and laying aside his paper cap and calico gown, close the green door of his shop, cross the brick pavement of the back yard, and ascend the stairs with the spindling banisters to his dressing-room. Here Malachi would have laid out the black swallow-tail coat with the high velvet collar, trousers to match, double-breasted waistcoat with gilt buttons, and fluffy cravat of white silk.

Then, while his master was dressing, the old servant would slip downstairs, and begin arranging the several rooms for the evening's guests, for there were always guests at night. The red damask curtains would be drawn close, the hearth swept clean, and fresh logs thrown

on the andirons. The lamp in the library would be lighted, and his master's great easy-chair wheeled close to a low table piled high with papers and magazines, his big-eyed reading-glasses within reach of his hand. The paper would be unfolded, aired at the snapping blaze, and hung over the arm of the chair. These duties attended to, the old servant, with a last satisfied glance about the room, would betake himself to the foot of the staircase, there to await his master's coming, glancing overhead at every sound, and ready to conduct him to his chair by the fire.

When Richard, his toilet completed, appeared at the top of the stairs, Malachi would stand until his master had reached the bottom step, wheel about, and, with head up, gravely and noiselessly precede him into the drawing-room, — the only time he ever dared to walk before him, — and with a wave of the hand and the air of a prince presenting one of his palaces, would say, "Yo' char's all ready, Marse Richard; bright fire burnin'," adding, with a low, sweeping bow, now that the ceremony was over, "Hope yo're feelin' fine dis evenin', sah."

He had said it hundreds of times in the course of the year, but always with a salutation that was a special tribute, and always with the same

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low bow, as he gravely pulled out the chair, puffing up the back cushion, his wrinkled hands resting on it until Richard had taken his seat. Then, with equal gravity, he would hand his master the evening paper and the big-bowed spectacles, and would stand gravely by until Richard had dismissed him with a gentle "Thank you, Malachi; that will do." And Malachi, with the serene, uplifted face as of one who had served in a temple, would tiptoe out to his pantry.

It had gone on for years — this waiting for Richard at the foot of the staircase. Malachi had never missed a night when his master was at home. It was not his duty, not a part of the established régime of the old house. No other family servant about Kennedy Square performed a like service for master or mistress. It was not even a custom of the times.

It was only one of "Malachi's ways," Richard would say, with a gentle smile quivering about his lips.

"I do dat 'cause it 's Marse Richard — dat 's all," Malachi would answer, drawing himself up with the dignity of a chamberlain serving a king, when somebody had the audacity to question him — a liberty he always resented.

They had been boys together — these two.

They had fished and hunted and robbed birds' nests and gone swimming with each other. They had fought for each other, and been whipped for each other many and many a time in the old plantation days. Night after night in the years that followed, they had sat by each other when one or the other was ill.

And now that each was an old man the mutual service was still continued.

"How are you getting on now, Malachi—better? Ah, that 's good;" and the master's thin white hand would be laid on the black wrinkled head with a soothing touch.

"Allus feels better, Marse Richard, when I kin git hold ob yo' han', sah," Malachi would answer.

Not his slave, remember. Not so many pounds of human flesh and bone and brains condemned to his service for life; for Malachi was free to come and go, and had been so privileged since the day the old Horn estate had been settled twenty years before, when Richard had given him his freedom with the other slaves that fell to his lot, — not that kind of a servitor at all, but his comrade, his chum, his friend; the one man, black as he was, in all the world who in laying down his life for him would but have counted it as gain.

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Just before tea Mrs. Horn, with a thin gossamer shawl about her shoulders, would come down from her bedroom above and join her husband. Then young Oliver himself would come bounding in, always a little late, but always with his face aglow and always bubbling over with laughter, until Malachi, now that the last member of the family was at home, would throw open the mahogany doors, and high tea would be served in the dining-room on the well rubbed, unclothed mahogany table, the plates, forks, and saucers under Malachi's manipulations touching the polished wood as noiselessly as soapbubbles.

Tea served and over, Malachi would light the candles in the big cut-glass chandelier in the front parlor, the especial pride of the hostess, it having hung in her father's house in Virginia.

After this he would retire once more to his pantry, this time to make ready for some special function to follow; for every evening at the Horn mansion had its separate festivity. On Mondays small whist-tables that unfolded or let down or evolved from half moons into circles, their tops covered with green cloth, were pulled out or moved around so as to form the centres of cosey groups. Some extra sticks of

hickory would be brought in and piled on the andirons, and the huge library table, always covered with the magazines of the day, "Littell's," "Westminster," "Blackwood's," and the "Scientific Review," would be pushed back against the wall to make room.

On Wednesdays there would be a dinner at six o'clock, served without pretence of culinary assistance from the pastry cook outside; even the ices were prepared at home. To these dinners any distinguished strangers who were passing through the city were sure to be invited. Malachi in his time had served many famous men, Charles Dickens, Ole Bull, Macready, and once the great Mr. Thackeray himself with a second glass of "that pale sherry, if you please," and at the great man's request, too, — an appreciation which, in the case of Mr. Thackeray, had helped to mollify Malachi's righteous wrath over the immortal novelist's ignorance of Southern dishes.

"Dat fat gemman wid de gold specs dat dey do say is so mighty great, ain't eat nuffin yet but soup an' a li'l mite o' 'tater,' he said to Aunt Hannah on one of his trips to the kitchen as dinner went on. "He let dat tar'pin an' dem ducks go by him same as dey was pizen. But I lay he knows 'bout dat ole yaller sherry,"

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and Malachi chuckled. "He keeps a-retchin' fur dat decanter as if he was 'feared somebody'd git it fust."

On Fridays there would invariably be a musicale — generally a quartette, with a few connoisseurs to listen and to criticise. Then the piano would be drawn out from its corner and the lid propped up, so that Max Unger of the "Harmonie" could find a place for his 'cello behind it, and there still be room for the inventor with his violin, — a violin with a tradition; for Ole Bull had once played on it, and in that same room, too, and had said it had the soul of a Cremona, which was quite true when Richard Horn touched its strings.

On all the other nights of the week Mrs. Horn was at home to all who came. Some gentle old lady from across the Square, perhaps, in lace cap and ribbons, with a work-basket filled with fancy crewels, and whose big son came at nine o'clock to take her home; or Oliver's young friends, boys and girls; or old Dr. Wallace, full of the day's gossip; or Miss Lavinia Clendenning, with news of the latest Assembly; or Nathan Gill with his flute.

But then it was Nathan always, whatever the occasion. From the time Malachi unlocked the front doors in the morning until he bolted

them for the night, Nathan came and went. The brick pavements were worn smooth, the neighbors said, between the flute player's humble lodgings in a side street and the Horn house, so many trips a day did the old man make. People smiled at him as he hurried along, his head bent forward, his long penwiper cloak reaching to his heels, a wide-brimmed Quaker hat crowning his head.

And always, whenever the night or whatever the function or whoever the guests, a particular side table was sure to be moved in from Malachi's pantry and covered with a snow-white cloth which played an important part in the evening's entertainment. This cloth was never empty. Upon its damask surface were laid a pile of India blue plates and a silver basket of cake, besides a collection of low glass tumblers with little handles, designed to hold various brews of Malachi's own concoctions, which he alone of all the denizens of Kennedy Square could compound, and the secret of which unhappily has perished with him.

And what wondrous aromas, too!

You may not believe it, but I assure you, on the honor of a Virginian, that for every one of these different nights in the old house on Kennedy Square there were special savory odors

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emanating from these brews, which settled at once and beyond question the precise function of the evening, and all before you could hand your hat to Malachi. If, for instance, as the front door was opened the aroma was one of hot coffee and the dry smell of fresh wafer-biscuit mingled with those of a certain brand of sherry, then it was always to be plain whist in the parlor, with perhaps only Colonel Clayton and Miss Clendenning or some one of the old ladies of the neighborhood, to hold hands in a rubber. If the fumes of apple toddy mingled with the fragrance of toasted apples were wafted your way, you might be sure that Max Unger, and perhaps Bobbinette, second violin, and Nathan — whatever the function it was always Nathan, it must be remembered — and a few kindred spirits who loved good music were expected; and at the appointed hour Malachi, his hands incased in white cotton gloves, would enter with a flourish, and would graciously beg leave to pass, the huge bowl held high above his head filled to the brim with smoking apple toddy, the little pippins, browned to a turn, floating on its top.

If the occasion was one of great distinction, one that fell on Christmas or on New Year's, or which celebrated some important family

gathering, the pungent odor of eggnog would have greeted you even before you could have slipped off your gum shoes in the hall, or hung your coat on the mahogany rack. This seductive concoction, the most potent of all Malachi's beverages, was always served from a green and gold Chinese bowl, and drunk not from the customary low tumblers, but from special Spode cups, and was, I must confess, productive of a head, - for I myself was once tempted to drink a bumper of it at this most delightful of houses with young Oliver; many years ago, it is true, but I have never forgotten it, - productive of an aching head, I think I said, that felt as big in the morning as the Canton bowl in which the mixture had been brewed.

Or, if none of these functions or festivals were taking place, and only one or two old cronies had dropped in on their way from the club, and had drawn up their chairs close to the dining-room table, and you had happened to be hanging up your hat in the hall at that moment, you would have been conscious of an aroma as delicate in flavor as that wafted across summer seas from far-off tropic isles: of pomegranates, if you will, ripening by crumbling walls; of purple grapes drinking in the sun; of

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pine and hemlock; of sweet spices and the scent of roses, or any other combination of delightful things which your excited imagination might suggest.

You would have known then just what had taken place; how, when the gentlemen were seated, Malachi in his undress blue coat and brass buttons had approached his master noiselessly from behind, and with a gravity that befitted the occasion had bent low his head, his hands behind his back, his head turned on one side, and in a hushed voice had asked this most portentous question:—

"Which madeira, Marse Richard?"

The only answer would have been a lifting of the eyebrow and an imperceptible nod of his master's head in the direction of the mahogany cellaret.

Malachi understood.

It was the Tiernan of '29.

And that worthy "Keeper of the Privy Seal and Key," pausing for an instant with his brown jug of a head bent before the cellaret, as a Mohammedan bends his head before a wall facing Mecca, had thereupon unlocked its secret chambers and had produced a low, deeply cut decanter topped by a wondrous glass stopper. This he had placed, with conscious importance,

on a small table before the two or three devotees gathered together in its honor, and the host, removing the stopper, had filled the slender glasses with a vintage that had twice rounded the Cape, —a wine of such rare lineage and flavor that those who had the honor of its acquaintance always spoke of it as one of the most precious possessions of the town —a wine, too, of so delicate an aroma that those within the charmed circle invariably lifted the thin glasses and dreamily inhaled its perfume before they granted their palates a drop.

Ah, those marvellous, unforgettable aromas that come to me out of the long ago, with all the reminders they bring of clink of glass and touch of elbow, of happy boys and girls and sweet old faces! It is forty years since they greeted my nostrils in the cool, bare, uncurtained hall of the old house in Kennedy Square, but they are still fresh in my memory. Sometimes it is the fragrance of newly made gingerbread, or the scent of creamy custard with just a suspicion of peach kernels; sometimes it is the scent of fresh strawberries - strawberries that meant the spring, not the hothouse or Bermuda - and sometimes it is the smell of roasted oysters or succulent canvas-backs! Forty years ago - and yet even to-day the

THE OLD HOUSE IN KENNEDY SQUARE

perfume of a roasted apple never greets me but I stand once more in the old-fashioned room listening to the sound of Nathan's flute; I see again the stately, silver-haired, high-bred mistress of the mansion with her kindly greeting, as she moves among her guests; I catch the figure of that old darky with his brown, bald head and the little tufts of gray wool fringing its sides, as he shuffles along in his blue coat and baggy white waistcoat and much too big gloves, and I hear the very tones of his voice as he pushes his seductive tray before me and whispers, confidentially, —

"Take a li'l ob de apple, sah; dat's whar de real 'spression ob de toddy is."

It was one of those Friday evenings, then, when the smell of roast apples steeping in hot toddy came wafting out the portals of Malachi's pantry, a smell of such convincing pungency that even the most infrequent of frequenters, having once inhaled it, would have known at the first whiff that some musical function was in order. The night was to be one of unusual interest.

Nathan Gill and Max Unger were expected, and Miss Lavinia Clendenning, completing with Richard a quartette for 'cello, flute, piano, and violin, for which Unger had arranged Beethoven's Overture to "Fidelio."

Nathan, of course, arrived first. On ordinary occasions another of those quaint ceremonies for which the house was famous would always take place when the old flute player entered the drawing-room, — a ceremony which brought a smile to the lips of those who had watched it for years, and which to this day

brings one to those who recall it. Nathan, with a look of quizzical anxiety on his pinched face, would tiptoe cautiously into the room, peering about to make sure of Richard's presence, his thin, almost transparent fingers outspread before him to show Richard that they were empty. Richard would step forward, and with a tone of assumed solicitude in his voice, would say, "Don't tell me, Nathan, that you have forgotten your flute!" and Nathan, pausing for a moment, would suddenly break into a smile, and with a queer little note of surprise in his throat, and a twinkle in his eye, would make answer by slowly drawing from his coat-tail pocket the three unjointed pieces, holding them up with an air of triumph, and slowly putting them together. Then these two old "Merry-Andrews " would lock arms and stroll into the library, laughing like schoolboys.

To-night, however, as Nathan had been specially invited to play, this little ceremony was omitted. On entering the hall, the musician gave his long black penwiper cloak and his hat to Malachi, and supporting himself by his delicate fingers laid flat on the hall table, extended first one thin leg, and then the other, while that obsequious darky unbuttoned his gaiters. His feet free, he straightened himself

up, pulled the precious flute from his coat-tail pocket, and carefully joined the parts. This done, he gave a look into the hall mirror, puffed out his scarf, combed his straight white hair forward over his ears with his fingers, and at Malachi's announcement glided through the open doorway to Mrs. Horn's chair, the flute in his hand held straight out, as an orator would have held his roll.

The hostess, who had been sitting by the fire, her white gossamer shawl about her spare shoulders, rose from her high-backed chair and, laying aside her knitting needles and wools, greeted the musician with as much cordiality, and it must be confessed with as much ceremony, as if she had not seen him a dozen times that week. One of the charms of the Horn mansion lay in these delightful blendings of affection and formality.

"Am I a little early?" he asked with as much surprise as if he were not as certain to be early when music was concerned as he was to be late in everything else. "Yes, my dear madam, I see that I am early, unless Miss Lavinia is late."

"You never could be too early, Nathan. Lavinia will be here in a moment," she answered with a smile, resuming her seat.

"I'm glad that I'm ahead of her for once," he replied, laughing. Then, turning to the inventor, who had come forward from where he had been studying the new score, he laid his hand affectionately on Richard's shoulder, as a boy would have done, and added, "How do you like Unger's new arrangement? I've been thinking of nothing else all day."

"Capital! Capital!" answered Richard, slipping his arm into Nathan's, and drawing him closer to the piano. "See how he has treated this adagio phrase," and he followed the line with his finger, humming the tune to Nathan. "The modulation, you see, is from E Major to A Major, and the flute sustains the melody; the effect is so peculiarly soft and the whole so bright with passages of sunshine all through it—oh, you will love it!"

While these two white-haired enthusiasts with their heads together were studying the score, beating time with their hands, after the manner of experts to whom all the curious jumble of dots and lines that plague so many of us are as plain as print, Malachi was receiving Miss Clendenning in the hall. Indeed, he had answered her knock as Nathan was passing into the drawing-room.

The new arrival bent her neck until Malachi

had relieved her of the long hooded cloak, gave a quick stamp with her little feet as she shook out her balloon skirts, and settled herself on the hall settee while Malachi unwound the white worsted "nubia" from her aristocratic throat. This done, she, too, held a short consultation with the hall mirror, carefully dusting with her tiny handkerchief the little pats of powder still left on her cheeks, and with her jewelled fingers smoothing the soft hair parted over her forehead, and tightening, meanwhile, the side combs that kept in place the clusters of short curls which framed her face. Then, with head erect and a gracious recognition of the old servant's ministrations, she floated past Malachi, bent double in her honor.

"Oh, I heard you, Nathan," she laughed, waving her fan toward him as she entered the room. "I'm not one minute late. Did you ever hear such impudence, Sallie, and all because he reached your door one minute before me," she added, stooping to kiss Mrs. Horn. Punctuality was one of the cardinal virtues of this most distinguished, prim, precise, and most lovable of old maids. "You are really getting to be dreadful, Mr. Nathan Gill, and so puffed up—is n't he, Richard?" As she spoke she turned abruptly and faced both gentlemen.

Then, with one of her rippling laughs, a laugh that Richard always said reminded him of the notes of a bird, she caught her skirts in her fingers, made the most sweeping of courtesies, and held out her hands to the two gentlemen who were crossing the room to meet her.

Richard, with the bow of a Cavalier, kissed the one offered him as gallantly as if she had been a duchess, telling her he had the rarest treat in store for her as soon as Unger came; and Nathan with mock devotion held the other between his two palms, and said that to be scolded by Miss Clendenning was infinitely better than being praised by anybody else. These pleasantries over, the two old gallants returned to the piano, to wait for Max Unger and to study again the crumpled pages of the score, which lay under the soft light of the candles.

The room relapsed once more into its wonted quiet, broken only by the whispered talk of well-bred people careful not to disturb each other. Mrs. Horn had begun to knit again. Miss Clendenning stood facing the fire, one foot resting on the fender.

This wee foot of the little lady was the delight and admiration of all the girls about Kennedy Square, and of many others across the

seas, too, — men and women for that matter. To-night it was incased in a black satin slipper and in a white spider-web stocking, about which were crossed two narrow black ribbons tied in a bow around the ankle. Such a charming little slipper peeping out from petticoats all bescalloped and belaced! Everything, in fact, about this dainty old maid, with her trim figure filling out her soft white fichu, still had that subtlety of charm which had played havoc with more than one heart in her day. Only Sallie Horn, who had all the dear woman's secrets, knew where those little feet had stepped and what hopes they had crushed. Only Sallie Horn, too, knew why the delicate finger was still bare of a plain gold ring. The world never thought it had made any difference to Miss Lavinia, but then the world had never peeped under the lower lid of Miss Clendenning's heart.

Suddenly the hushed quiet of the room was broken by a loud knock at the front door, or rather by a series of knocks, so quick and sharp that Malachi started from his pantry on the run.

"That must be Max," said Richard. "Now, Lavinia, we will move the piano, so as to give you more room."

Mrs. Horn pushed back her chair, rose to her

feet, and stood waiting to receive the noted 'cellist, without whom not a note could be sounded, and Miss Clendenning took her foot from the fender and dropped her skirts.

But it was not Max!

Not wheezy, perspiring old Max Unger after all, walking into the room mopping his face with one hand and with the other lugging his big 'cello, embalmed in a green baize bag — he would never let Malachi touch it; not Max at all, but a fresh, rosy-cheeked young fellow of twenty-two, who came bounding in with a laugh, tossing his hat to Malachi, — a well-knit, muscular young fellow, with a mouth full of white teeth and a broad brow projecting over two steel-blue eyes that were snapping with fun.

With his coming the quiet of the place departed and a certain breezy atmosphere permeated the room, as if a gust of cool wind had followed him. With him, too, came a hearty, whole-souled joyousness, — a joyousness of so sparkling and so radiant a kind that it seemed as if all the sunshine he had breathed for twenty years in Kennedy Square had somehow been stored away in his boyish veins.

"Oh, here you are, you dear Miss Lavinia," he cried out, his breath half gone from his dash

across the Square. "How did you get here first?"

"On my two feet, you stupid Oliver," cried Miss Lavinia, shaking her curls at him. "Did you think somebody carried me?"

"No, I did n't; but that would n't be much to carry, Miss Midget," his pet name for her. "But which way did you come? I looked up and down every path and"—

"And went all the way round by Sue Clayton's to find me, did n't you? Oh, you can't throw dust in the Midget's eyes, you young rascal!" and she stretched up her two dainty hands, drew his face toward her, and kissed him on the lips.

"There," and she patted his cheek, "now tell me all about it, you dear Ollie. What did you want to see me for?" she added, with one of those quick divinations that made her so helpful a confidante. Then, in a lowered voice, "What has Sue done?"

"Nothing — not one thing. She is n't bothering her head about me. I only stopped there to leave a book, and "—

Mrs. Horn, with laughing, inquiring eyes, looked up from her chair at Miss Clendenning, and made a little doubting sound with her lips. Black-eyed Sue Clayton, with her curls down

her back, home from boarding-school for the Easter holidays, was Oliver's latest flame. His mother loved to tease him about his love affairs, and always liked him to have a new one. She could see farther into his heart, she thought, when the face of some sweet girl lay mirrored in its depths.

Oliver heard the doubting sound his mother made, and reaching over her chair, flung his arms about her neck and kissed her as if she had been a girl.

"Now, don't you laugh, you dear old motherkins," he cried, drawing her nearer to him until her face touched his. "Sue don't care a thing about me, and I did promise her the book, and I ran every step of the way to give it to her — did n't I, Uncle Nat?" he added gayly, hoping to divert the topic. "You were behind the sun-dial when I passed — don't you remember?" He shrank a little from the badinage.

The old musician heard the question, but only waved his flute behind him in answer. He did not even lift his head from beside Richard's at the score.

Oliver waited an instant, and getting no further reply, released his hold about his mother's neck, now that he had kissed her into silence, and turned to Miss Clendenning again.

"Come, Miss Lavinia. Come into the library. I've something very important to talk to you about. Really, now; no nonsense about it. You've plenty of time, — old Max won't be here for an hour. He's always late, is n't he, mother?"

Miss Clendenning turned quietly, lifted her eyes in a martyr-like way toward Mrs. Horn, who shook her head playfully in answer, and with Oliver's arm about her entered the library. She could never refuse any one of the young people when they came to her with their secrets -most important and never to be postponed secrets, of course, that could hardly wait the telling. Her little tea-room across the Square. with its red damask curtains, its shiny brass andirons, easy-chairs, and lounges, was really more of a confessional than a boudoir. Many a sorrow had been drowned in the cups of tea that she had served with her own hand in eggshell Spode cups, and many a young girl and youth who had entered its cosey interior with heavy hearts had left it with the sunshine of a new hope breaking through their tears. But then everybody knew the bigness of Miss Clendenning's sympathies. It was one of the things for which they loved her.

She, of course, knew what the boy wanted

now. If it were not to talk about Sue Clayton, it was sure to be about some one of the other girls. The young people thought of nothing else but their love affairs, and talked of nothing else, and the old people loved to live their youth over again in listening. It was one of the traditional customs of Kennedy Square.

Miss Clendenning settled herself in a corner of the carved haircloth sofa, touched her side combs with her finger to see that they were in place, tucked a red cushion behind her back, crossed her two little feet on a low stool, the two toes peeping out like the heads of two mice, and taking Oliver's hand in hers said, in her sweet, coaxing voice, —

- "Now, you dear boy, it is Sue, is n't it?"
- "No!"
- "Not Sue? Who, then?"
- "Mr. Crocker."
- "What Mr. Crocker?" She arched her eyebrows and looked at him in surprise. The name came as a shock. She knew of Mr. Crocker, of course, but she wanted Oliver to describe him. Surely, she thought, with a sudden sense of alarm, the boy has not fallen in love with the daughter of that shabby old man.
- "Why, the landscape painter, the one father knows! I have been taking drawing lessons

of him, and he says I've got a lot of talent, and that all I want is practice. He says that if I begin now and draw from the cast three or four hours a day, that by the end of the year I can begin in color; and then I can go to New York and study, and then to Paris."

The little lady scrutinized him from under her eyelids. The boy's enthusiasm always delighted her; she would often forget what he was talking about, so interested was she in following his gestures as he spoke.

- "And what then?"
- "Why, then I can be a painter, of course. Is n't that a great deal better than sitting every day in Judge Ellicott's dingy office reading law books? I hate the law!"
 - "And you love Mr. Crocker?"
 - "Yes, don't you?"
- "I don't know him, Ollie. Tell me what he is like."
- "Well, he is n't young any more. He's about father's age, but he's a splendid old man, and he's so poor! Nobody buys his pictures, nor appreciates him; and, just think, he has to paint portraits and dogs and anything he can get to do. Don't you think that's a shame? Nobody goes to see him but father and Uncle Nat and one or two others. They don't seem

to think him a gentleman." He was putting the case so as to enlist all her sympathies at once.

"He has a daughter, has n't he?" She was probing him quietly and without haste. Time enough for her sympathies to work when she got at the facts.

"Yes, but I don't like her very much, for I don't think she's very good to him." Miss Clendenning smothered a little sigh of relief; there was no danger, thank Heaven, in that direction! What, then, could he want, she thought to herself.

"And he's so different from anybody I ever met," Oliver continued. "He does n't talk about horses and duck-shooting and politics, or music or cards like every one you meet, except daddy, but he talks about pictures and artists and great men. Just think, he was a young student in Düsseldorf for two years, and then he shouldered a knapsack and tramped all through Switzerland, painting as he went, and often paying for his lodgings with his sketches. Then he was in Paris for ever so long, and now he is here, where" —

"Where you tell me he is painting dogs for a living," interrupted Miss Clendenning. "Do you think, you young scapegrace, that this

would be better than being a lawyer like Judge Ellicott?" and she turned upon him with one of her quick outbursts of mock indignation.

"But I'm not going to paint dogs," he replied, with some impatience. "I am going to paint women, like the Sir Peter Lely that Uncle John Tilghman has. Oh, she's a beauty! I took Mr. Crocker to see her the other day. It had just been brought in from the country, you know. You should have heard him go on. He says there's nobody who can paint a portrait like it nowadays. He raved about her. You know it is Uncle John Tilghman's grandmother when she was a girl." His voice suddenly dropped to a more serious tone as he imparted this last bit of information.

Miss Clendenning knew whose grandmother it was, and knew and loved every tone in the canvas. It had hung in the Tilghman manor house for years and was one of its most precious treasures, but she did not intend to stop and discuss it now.

"Mr. Crocker wants me to copy it just as soon as I draw a little better. Uncle John will let me, I know."

Miss Clendenning tapped her foot in a noiseless tattoo upon the stool, and for a time looked off into space. She wanted to draw him out, to

know from what depth this particular enthusiasm had sprung. She was accustomed to his exuberance of spirits; it was one of the many things she loved him for. If this new craze were but an idle fancy, and he had had many of them, it would wear itself out, and the longer they talked about it the better. If, however, it sprang from an inborn taste, and was the first indication of a hitherto undeveloped talent forcing itself to the surface, the situation was one demanding the greatest caution. Twigs like Oliver bent at the wrong time might never straighten out again.

"And why did you come to me about this, Ollie? Why don't you talk to your father?"

"I have. He doesn't object. He says that Mr. Crocker is one of the rare men of the time, and that only inexperience among the people here prevents him from being appreciated. That's what he goes to see him for. It is n't father that worries me, it's mother. I know just what she 'll say. She 's got her heart set on my studying law, and she won't listen to anything else. I would n't object to the law if I cared for it, but I don't. That's what makes it come so hard."

"And you want me to speak to your mother?"

"Yes, of course. That's just what I do want you to do. Nobody can help me but you," he cried, with that coaxing manner which would have seemed effeminate until one looked at his well built muscular body and the firm lines about his mouth. "You tell her of all the painters you knew in London when you lived there. and of what they do and how they are looked up to, and that some of them are gentlemen, and not idlers and loafers. Mother will listen to you, I know, and maybe then when I tell her it won't be such a shock to her. Do you know, it is incomprehensible to me, all this contempt for people who don't do just the same things that their grandfathers did! And how do I know, too, that they are right about it all? It seems to me that when a man is born a gentleman and is a gentleman, he can follow any occupation he pleases. Instead of his trade making him respectable he should make it so." He spoke with a virility she had never suspected in him before, this boy whom she had held in her arms as a baby and who was still only the child to her.

"But, Ollie," she interrupted, in some surprise, "you must never forget that you are your father's son. No one is absolutely independent in this world; every one has his family

to consider." She was becoming not only interested now, but anxious. Mr. Crocker had evidently been teaching the boy something besides the way to use his pencil. Such democratic ideas were rare in Kennedy Square.

"Yes, I know what you mean." He had sprung from his seat now and was standing over her, she looking up into his face. "You mean that it is all right for me to go into old Mr. Wardell's counting-house, because he sells coffee by the cargo, but that I can't take a situation in Griggson's grocery here on the corner, because he sells coffee by the pound. You mean, too, that it is possible for a man to be a professor or president of a college and still be a gentleman, but if he teaches in the public school he is done for. You mean, too, that I could saw off a patient's leg and still be invited to Uncle Tilghman's house to dinner, but that if I pulled out one of his teeth I could only eat in his kitchen."

Miss Clendenning threw back her head and laughed until the combs in her side curls needed refastening, but she did not interrupt him.

"I can't get this sort of thing into my head, and I never will. And father does n't believe in it any more than I do, and I don't think that mother would if it was n't for a lot of old people who live around this Square and who talk

of nothing all day but their relations and think there 's nobody worth knowing but themselves. Now, you 've got to talk to mother; I won't take no for an answer,' and he threw himself down beside her again. "Come, dear Midget, hold up your right hand and promise me now, before I let you go," he pleaded in his wheedling way that made him so lovable to his intimates, — catching her two hands in his and holding them tight.

Of course she promised. Had she ever refused him anything? And Oliver, a boy again. now that his confessions were made, kissed her joyously on both cheeks, and instantly forgetting his troubles, as his habit was when prospects of relief had opened, he launched out into an account of a wonderful adventure Mr. Crocker once had in an old town in Italy, where he was locked up over night in a convent by mistake; and how he had slept on his knapsack in the chapel, and what the magistrate had said to him the next day, and how he had to paint a portrait of that suspicious officer to prove he was a painter and a man of the best intentions. In his enthusiasm he not only acted the scene, but he imitated the gesture and dialect of the several parties to the escapade so perfectly that the little lady, in her delight over the

story, quite forgot her anxiety and even the musicale itself, and only remembered the quartette when Malachi, bowing obsequiously before her, said,—

"Dey's a-waitin' for you, Miss Lavinia. Mister Unger done come, and Marse Richard say he can't wait a minute."

When she and Oliver entered the drawing-room, the 'cellist was the centre of the group. He was stripping off the green baize cover from his instrument, and at the same time was apologizing, in his broken English, for being so late. Richard was interrupting him with enthusiastic outbursts over the new score, which still lay under the wax candles lighting the piano, and which he and Nathan, while waiting for the musician, had been silently practising in sundry bobs of their heads and rhythmic beatings of their hands.

"My dear Max," Richard continued, with a hand on the musician's shoulder, patting him in appreciation as he spoke, "we will forgive you anything. You have so exactly suited to the 'cello the opening theme. And the flute passages! They are exquisitely introduced. We will let Miss Clendenning decide when she hears it," and he turned Unger's head in the direction of the advancing lady. "Here she comes

now; you of course know the fine quality of Miss Clendenning's ear."

Herr Unger placed his five fat fingers over his waistband, bowed as low to Miss Lavinia as his great girth would permit, and said, —

"Ah, yes, I know. Miss Clendenning not only haf de ear, she haf de life in de end of de finger. De piano make de sound like de bird when she touch it."

The little lady thanked him in her sweetest voice, made a courtesy, and extended her hand to Max, who kissed it with much solemnity; and Richard, putting his arm around the 'cellist's fat shoulders, conducted him across the room, whereupon Nathan, with the assumed air of an old beau, offered his crooked elbow to Miss Clendenning as an apology for having reached the house before her. Then, seating her at the piano with a great flourish, he waved his hand to Oliver, who had drawn up a chair beside his mother, and with a laugh, cried, —

"Here, you young lover, come and turn the leaves for Miss Lavinia. It may keep you from running over other people in the dark, even if they are accused of hiding behind sun-dials."

With the beginning of the overture Mrs. Horn laid down her work, and drawing her white gossamer shawl about her shoulders, gave herself

up to the enjoyment of the music. The overture was one of her favorites, one she and Richard had often played together as a duet in their younger days.

Leaning back in her easy-chair with half-closed eyes, her clear-cut features in silhouette against the glow of the fire, her soft gray curls nestling in the filmy lace that fell about her temples, she expressed in every line of her face and figure that air of graceful repose which only comes to those highly favored women who have all their lives been nurtured in a home of loving hands, tender voices, and noiseless servants—lives of never-ending affection without care or sorrow.

And yet had you, even as she sat there, studied carefully this central figure of the Horn mansion, — this practical, outspoken, gentle-voiced, tender wife and mother, tenacious of her opinions, yet big enough and courageous enough to acknowledge her mistakes, this woman wise in counsel, sympathetic in sorrow, joyous with the young, restful with the old, — you would have discovered certain lines about her white forehead which advancing years alone could not have accounted for.

These lines seemed all the deeper to-night. Only a few hours before, Richard had come to

her, while Malachi was arranging his clothes, with the joyful news of a new device which he had developed during the day for his motor. He could hardly wait to tell her, he had said. The news was anything but joyful to her. She knew what it meant; she knew what sums had been wasted on the other devices, involving losses which at this time they could so little afford. She was glad, therefore, to free her mind for the moment from these anxieties; glad to sit alone and drink in the melodies that the quartette set free.

As she sat listening, beating time noiselessly with her thin, upraised hand, her head resting quietly, a clear, silvery note, clear as a bird's, leaped from Nathan's flute, soared higher and higher, trembled like a lark poised in air, and died away in tones of such exquisite sweetness that she turned her head in delight toward the group about the piano, fixing her gaze on Nathan. The old man's eyes were riveted on the score, his figure bent forward in the intensity of his absorption, his whole face illumined with the ecstasy that possessed him. Then she looked at Richard, standing with his back to her, his violin tucked under his chin, his body swaying in rhythm with the music. Unger sat next to him, his instrument between his knees, his

stolid, shiny face unruffled by the glorious harmonies of Beethoven.

Then her glance rested on Oliver. He was hanging over the piano, whispering in Miss Clendenning's ear, his face breaking into smiles at her playful chidings. If the pathos of the melody had reached him, he showed no sign of its effects.

Instantly there welled up in her heart a sudden gush of tenderness, one of those quick outbursts that often overwhelm a mother when her eyes rest on a son whose heart is her own, an outburst all the more intensified by the melody that thrilled her. Why should her heart have been troubled? Here was her strong hope. Here was her chief reliance; here the hope of the future. How could she doubt or suffer when this promise of the coming day was before her in all the beauty and strength of his young manhood!

With the echoes of Nathan's flute still vibrating in her, and with her mind filled with the delight of these fresh hopes, she suddenly recalled the anxious look on her boy's face as he led Miss Clendenning into the library—a new look—one she had never seen before. Still under the quickening spell of the music, she began to exaggerate its cause. What had

troubled him? Why had he told Lavinia, and not her? Was there anything serious, something he had kept from her to save her pain?

From this moment her mind became absorbed in her boy. With restless, impatient fingers she began thrumming on the arm of her chair. Oliver would tell her, she knew, before many hours; but she could not wait, — she wanted to know at once.

With the ending of the first part of the overture, and before the two gentlemen had laid down their instruments to grasp Unger's hands, she called to Miss Clendenning, who sat at the piano alone, Oliver having slipped away unobserved.

"Lavinia!"

Miss Clendenning raised her eyes in answer.

"Come over and sit by me, dear, while the gentlemen rest."

Miss Clendenning picked up her white silk mits and fan lying beside the candles, and moved toward the fireplace. Malachi saw her coming, — he was always in the room during the interludes, — and with an alacrity common to him when the distinguished little lady was present, drew up a low chair beside his mistress and stood behind it until she took her seat.

STRAINS FROM NATHAN'S FLUTE

Miss Clendenning smoothed out her skirt, and settled herself with the movement of a pigeon filling her nest. Then she laid her mits in her lap and fanned herself softly.

"Well, Sallie, what is it? Did you ever hear Nathan play so well?" she asked at last.

"What did Oliver want, my dear?" replied Mrs. Horn, ignoring her question. "Is there anything worrying him, or is Sue at the bottom of it?"

The little woman smiled quizzically. "No, Sallie — not Sue — not this time. That little rattle-brain's affections will only last the week out. Nothing very important — that is, nothing urgent. We were talking about the Tilghman portraits and the Lely that Cousin John has brought into town from Claymore Manor, and what people should and should not do to earn their living, and what professions were respectable. I thought one thing and Ollie thought another. Now, what profession of all others would you choose for a young man starting out in life?"

"What has he been telling you, Lavinia? Does he want to leave Judge Ellicott's office?" Mrs. Horn asked quietly. She always went straight to the root of any matter.

"Just answer my question, Sallie."

"I'd rather he'd be a lawyer, of course. Why?"

"Suppose he won't, or can't?"

"Is that what he told you, Lavinia, on the sofa?" She was leaning forward, her cheek on her hand, her eyes fixed on the blazing logs.

"He told me a great many things, half of them boy's talk. Now answer my question. Suppose he could n't study law, because his heart was n't in it, what then?"

"I know, Lavinia, what you mean." There was an anxious tone now in the mother's voice. "And Oliver talked to you about this?" As she spoke she settled back in her chair, and a slight sigh escaped her.

"Don't ask me, Sallie, for I'm not going to tell you. I want to know for myself what you think, so that I can help the boy."

Mrs. Horn turned her head and looked toward Richard. She had suspected as much from some hints that Judge Ellicott had dropped when she had asked him about Oliver's progress: "He is still holding down his chair, madam." She thought at the time that it was one of the judge's witticisms, but she saw now that it had a deeper meaning. After some

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moments she said, fixing her eyes on Miss Clendenning, —

"Well, now, Lavinia, tell me what you think. I should like your opinion. What would you wish to do with him if he were your son?"

Miss Lavinia smiled, and her eyes half closed. For a brief moment there came to her the picture of what such a blessing would have been. Her son! No! It was always somebody else's son or daughter to whom her sympathy must go.

"Well, Sallie," she answered, -she was leaning over now, her hands in her lap, apparently with lowered eyelids, but really watching Mrs. Horn's face from the corner of her eye, -"I don't think we can make a clergyman out of him, do you?" Mrs. Horn frowned, but she did not interrupt. "No, we cannot make a parson out of him. I meant, my love, something in surplices, not in camp meetings, of course. Think of those lovely pink cheeks in a high collar and bishop's sleeves! Wouldn't he be too sweet for anything?" and she laughed one of her little cooing laughs. "Nor a doctor," she continued, with a slight interrogation in her tone, "nor a shopkeeper, nor a painter," — and she shot a quick glance from under her arching eyebrows at her companion, but Mrs. Horn's face gave no sign, — "nor a musician. Why not a

musician, Sallie? He sings like an angel, you know?" She was planting her shafts all about the target, her eyes following the flight of each arrow.

Mrs. Horn raised her head and laid her hand firmly on Miss Clendenning's wrist.

"We won't have him a shopkeeper, Lavinia," she said with some positiveness, "nor a barber nor a painter nor a cook nor a dentist. We'll try and keep him a gentleman, my dear, whatever happens. As for his being a musician, I think you will agree with me, that music is only possible as an accomplishment, never when it is a profession. Look at that dear old man over there, "—and she pointed to Nathan, who was bending forward running over on his flute some passages from the score, his white hair covering his coat-collar behind, — "so absolutely unfitted for this world as he is, so purposeless, so hopelessly inert. He breathes his whole soul into that flute, and yet"—

"And a good deal comes out of it sometimes, my dear,—to-night, for instance," laughed Miss Lavinia. "Did you catch those birdlike notes?"

"Yes, and they thrilled me through and through; but sweet as they are, they have n't helped him make a career."

At this moment Richard called to Unger, who

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had been sitting on the sofa in the library, "cooling off," he said, as he mopped his head with a red handkerchief, one of Malachi's cups in his hand.

Miss Lavinia caught sight of the 'cellist's advancing figure and rose from her seat. "I must go now," she said; "they want to play it again." She moved a step forward, gave a glance at her side curls in the oval mirror over the mantel, stopped hesitatingly, and then bending over Mrs. Horn said thoughtfully, her hand on her companion's shoulder, "Sallie, don't try to make water run uphill. If Ollie belonged to me I'd let him follow his tastes, whatever they were. You'll spoil the shape of his instep if you keep him wearing Chinese shoes," and she floated over to join the group of musicians.

Mrs. Horn again settled herself in her chair. She understood now the look on Oliver's face. She was right, then; something was really worrying him. The talk with Miss Lavinia had greatly disturbed her, so much so that she could not listen to the music. Again her eyes rested on Oliver, who had come in and joined the group at the piano, all out of breath with his second run across the Square, this time to tell Sue of Miss Clendenning's promise. He was never happy unless he was sharing what

was on his mind with another, and if there was a girl within reach he was sure to pour it into her willing ears.

Mrs. Horn looked at him with a pang about her heart. From which side of the house had come this fickleness, this instability and love of change in Oliver's character? she asked herself, — a new interest every day, all the traditions of his forefathers violated. How could she overcome it in him? how make him more practical? Years before, when she had thought him proud, she had sent him to market and had made him carry home the basket on his arm, facing the boys who laughed at him. He had never forgotten the lesson; he was neither proud nor lazy any more. But what could she do in a situation like this?

Harassed by these doubts, her eyes wandered over Oliver's slender, well-knit muscular figure as he stood whispering to Miss Clendenning. She noticed the fine, glossy hair brushed from the face and worn long in the neck, curling behind the ears. She noted every movement of his body: the graceful way in which he talked with his hands, using his fingers to accentuate his words, and the way in which he shrugged his shoulders, — the shrug of a Frenchman, although not a drop of their blood could be found

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in his veins, — and in the quick lifting of the hand and the sidelong glance of the eye, all so characteristic of Richard when some new thought or theory reached his brain for the first time. Gradually and unconsciously she began to compare each feature of Oliver's face with that of the father who stood beside him: the alert blue eyes, overhanging brow, and soft silkiness of the hair identically the same, even the way it lay in the neck. And again she looked at Richard, drawing the bow as if in a dream.

Instantly a thought entered her mind that drove the blood from her cheeks. These vacillations of her husband's! This turning from one thing to another,—first the law, then these inventions that never lead anywhere, and now Oliver beginning in the same way, almost in the same steps! Could these traits be handed down to the children? Would Oliver be like Richard in —

Instinctively she stopped short before the disloyal thought could form itself in her brain, straightened herself in her chair, and closed her lips tight.

The music ceased; Nathan laid his flute on the piano; Unger rose from his seat, and Richard turned to talk to Miss Clendenning. But she was unmindful of it all; she still sat in her

chair, her eyes searching the blazing logs, her hands in her lap.

Only Malachi with his silver tray recalled her to consciousness.

THE OPEN-AIR DRAWING-ROOMS OF KENNEDY SQUARE

F in the long summer days Kennedy Square was haunted by the idle and the weary, in the cool summer nights its dimly lighted paths were alive with the tread of flying feet, and its shadowy benches gay with the music of laughter and merry greetings.

With the going down of the sun, the side-walks were sprinkled, and the whole street about the Square watered from curb to curb, to cool its sun-baked cobbles. The doors and windows of all the houses were thrown wide to welcome the fresh night air, — laden with the perfume of magnolia, jasmine, and sweet-smelling box. Easy-chairs and cushions were brought out and placed on the clean steps of the porches, and the wide piazzas covered with squares of chinamatting, to make ready for the guests of the evening.

These guests would begin to gather as soon as the twilight settled, the young girls in their

pretty muslin frocks and ribbons, the young men in white duck suits and straw hats. They thronged the cool, well-swept paths, chattered in bunches under the big trees, or settled like birds on the stone seats and benches. Every few minutes some new group, fresh from their tea-tables, would emerge from one of the houses, poise like a flock of pigeons on the top step, listen to the guiding sound of the distant laughter, and then swoop down in mad frolic, settling in the midst of the main covey, under the big sycamores; until, roused at the signal of some male bird in a straw hat, or in answer to the call of some bareheaded songstress from across the Square, the whole covey would dash out one of the rickety gates, only to alight again on the stone steps of a neighbor's porch, where their chatter and pipings would last far into the night.

It was extraordinary how, from year to year, these young birds and even the old ones remembered the best perches about the Square. On Colonel Clayton's ample portico, big enough to shelter half a dozen covies behind its honey-suckles, both young and old would settle side by side; the younger bevy hovering about the judge's blue-eyed daughter, a bird so blithe and of so free a wing, that the flock always fol-

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lowed wherever she alighted. On Judge Bowman's wide veranda only a few old cocks from the club could be found, and not infrequently some rare birds from out of town perched about a table alive with the clink of glass and rattle of crushed ice; while next the church, on old Mrs. Pancoast's portico, with its tall Corinthian columns, - Mr. Pancoast was the archdeacon of the Noah's Ark church, - one or two old grandmothers and a grave old owl of a family doctor were sure to fill the rocking-chairs. As for Richard Horn's marble steps, they were never free from stray young couples who flew in to rest on Malachi's chairs and cushions. Sometimes only one bird and her mate would be tucked away in the shadow of the doorway; sometimes only an old pair, like Mrs. Horn and Richard, would occupy its corners.

These porticos and stone doorsteps were really the open-air drawing-rooms of Kennedy Square in the soft summer nights. Here ices were served and cool drinks, — sherbets for the young and juleps and sherry cobblers for the old. At the Horn house, on great occasions, as when some big melon that had lain for days on the cool cellar floor was cut (it was worth a day's journey to see Malachi cut a melon), the guests would not only crowd the steps, but all

the hall and half up the slender staircase, where they would sit with plates in their laps, the young men serving their respective sweethearts.

This open-air night life had gone on since Kennedy Square began; each doorstep had its habitués and each veranda its traditions. There was but one single porch, in fact, facing its stately trees, whereon no flocks of birds, old or young, ever alighted, and that belonged to Peter Skimmerton, the meanest man in town, who in a fit of parsimony over candles, so the girls said, had bared his porch of every protecting vine and had placed opposite his doorstep a glaring street gas-lamp, a monstrous and never to be forgotten affront.

And yet, free and easy as the life was, no stranger sat himself down on any one of these porches until his pedigree had been thoroughly investigated, no matter how large might be his bank account nor how ambitious his soarings. No premeditated discourtesy ever initialled this exclusiveness, and none was ever intended. Kennedy Square did not know the blood of the stranger — that was all — and not knowing it they could not trust him. And it would have been altogether useless for him to try to disguise his antecedents, especially if he came from their own State, or any State south of it.

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His record could be as easily reached and could be as clearly read as a title deed. Even the servants knew. Often they acted as clerks of the rolls.

"Dat Mister Jawlins, did you ask 'bout?" Malachi would say. "Why, you know whar he comes f'om. He's one o' dem Anne Rundle Jawlinses. He do look mighty peart, an' dey do say he's mighty rich, but he can't fool Malachi. I knowed his gran'pa," and that wise and politic darky, with the honor of the house before his eyes, would shake his head knowingly and with such an ominous look, that had you not known the only crime of the poor grandfather to have been a marriage with his overseer's daughter, - a very worthy woman, by the way, - instead of with some lady of quality, you would have supposed he had added the sin of murder to the crime of low birth. On the other hand, had you asked Malachi about some young aristocrat who had forgotten to count his toddies the night before, that Defender of the Faith would have replied, -

"Lawd bress ye! Co'se dese young gemmens like to frolic—an' dey do git dat way sometimes—'t ain't nuthin. Dem Dorseys was allers like dat," the very tones of his voice carrying such convictions of the young man's

respectability that you would have felt safe in keeping a place at your table for the delinquent, despite your knowledge of his habits.

This general intimacy between the young people, and this absolute faith of their elders in the quality of family blood was one of the reasons why every man about Kennedy Square was to be trusted with every other man's sister, and why every mother gave the latch-key to every other mother's son, and why it made no difference whether the young people came home early or late, so that they all came home when the others did. If there were love-making and of course there was love-making - it was of the old-fashioned boy-and-girl kind, with keepsakes and pledges and long walks in the afternoons and whispered secrets at the merrymakings. Never anything else. Woe betide the swain who forgot himself ever so slightly! There was no night-key for him after that, nor would any of the girls on any front steps in town ever look his way again when he passed: and to their credit be it said, few of the young men, either. From that day on the offender became a pariah. He had committed the unpardonable sin.

As for these young men, this life with the girls was all the life they knew. There were

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fishing parties, of course, at the "Falls" when the gudgeons were biting, and picnics in the woods; and there were oyster roasts in winter, and watermelon parties in summer, but the girls must be present too. For in those simple days there were no special clubs with easychairs and convenient little tables loaded with drinkables and smokables; none for the young Olivers, and certainly none for the women. There was, to be sure, in every Southern city, an old mausoleum of a club, sometimes two, each more desolate than the other, haunted by gouty old parties and bon vivants; but the young men never passed through their doors except on some call of urgency. When a man was old enough to be admitted to the club there was no young damosel on Malachi's steps, or any other steps, who would care a rap about him. His day was done.

For these were the days in which the woman ruled in court and home, championed by loyal retainers who strove hourly to do her bidding. Even the gray-haired men would tell you over their wine of some rare woman whom they had known in their youth, and who was still their standard of all that was gentle and gracious, and for whom they would claim a charm of manner and stately comeliness that, "my dear sir, not

only illumined her drawing-room, but conferred distinction on the commonwealth."

"Mrs. Tilghman's mother, were you talking about?" Colonel Clayton or Richard Horn or some other old resident would ask. "I remember her perfectly. We have rarely had a more adorable woman, sir. She was a vision of beauty, and the pride of our State for years."

Should some shadow have settled upon any one of these homes,—some shadow of drunkenness, or love of play, or shattered brain, or worse,—the woman bore the sorrow in gentleness and patience, and still loved on and suffered, and loved and suffered again, hoping against hope. But no dry briefs were ever permitted to play a part, dividing heart and hearth. Kennedy Square would have looked askance had such things been suggested or even mentioned in its presence, and the dames would have lowered their voices in discussing them. Even the men would have passed with unlifted hats either party to such shame.

Because of this loyalty to womankind and this reverence for the home, a reverence which began with the mother love and radiated to every sister they knew, no woman of quality ever earned her own bread while there was an ablebodied man of her blood above ground to earn it

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for her. Nor could there be any disgrace so lasting, even to the third and fourth generation, as the stigma an outraged community would place upon the renegade who refused her aid and comfort. An unprogressive, quixotic life if you will, a life without growth and dominant personalities and lofty responsibilities and Godgiven rights; but oh! the sweet mothers that it gave us, and the wholesomeness, the cleanliness, the loyalty of it all!

With the coming of summer, then, each white marble step of the Horn mansion, under Malachi's care, shone like a china plate.

"Can't hab dese yere young ladies spile dere clean frocks on Malachi's steps — no, sah," he would say; "Marse Oliver'd r'ar an' pitch tur'ble."

There were especial reasons this year for these extra touches of rag and brush. Malachi knew "de signs" too well to be deceived. Pretty Sue Clayton, with her soft eyes and the mass of ringlets that framed her face, had now completely taken possession of Oliver's heart, and the old servant already had been appointed chief of the postal service, — two letters a day sometimes, with all the verbal messages in between.

This love affair, which had begun in the winter, was not yet of so serious a nature as to cause distress or unhappiness to either one of their respective houses, nor had it reached a point where suicide or an elopement were all that was left. It was, in truth, but a few months old, and so far the banns had not been published. Within the last week Miss Sue had been persuaded "to wait for him," - that was all. She had not, it is true, burdened her gay young heart with the number of years of her patience. She and Oliver were sweethearts, that was enough for them both. As proof of it. was she not wearing about her neck at the very moment a chain which he had fashioned for her out of cherry stones? and had she not given him in return one of those same ringlets? and had she not tied it with a blue ribbon herself? And above all, and what could be more conclusive, had she not taken her hair down to do it, and let him select the very tress that pleased him best? and was not this curl, at that very moment, concealed in a pill-box and safely hidden in his unlocked bureau drawer. where his mother saw it with a smile the last time she put away his linen? This love affair, as were the love affairs of all the other young people, was common gossip around

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Kennedy Square. Had there been any doubts about it, it would only have been necessary to ask any old Malachi or Hannah or Juno. They could have given every detail of the affair, descanting upon all its joys and its sorrows.

Sweet girls of the days gone by, what crimes some of you have to answer for! At least one of you must remember how my own thumb was cut into slits over these same cherry stones, and why the ends of your ringlets were tucked away in a miniature box in my drawer, with the pressed flowers and signet ring, and the rest of it. And you could, if you would, recall a waiting promise made to me years and years ago. And the wedding! Surely you have not forgotten that! I was there, you remember — but not as the groom.

On one particular evening in June—an evening that marked an important stage in the development of Oliver's fortunes—the front porch, owing to Malachi's attentions, was in spotless condition—steps, knocker, and round silver knobs.

Sue and Oliver sat on the top step; they had stolen across from the Clayton porch on some pretended errand. Sue's chin was in her hand,

and Oliver sat beside her, pouring out his heart as he had never done before. He had realized long ago that she could never understand his wanting to be a painter as Miss Clendenning had done, and so he had never referred to it since the night of the musicale, when he had raced across the Square to tell her of his talk with the little lady. Sue, as he remembered afterward, had listened abstractedly. She would have preferred at the time his running in to talk about herself rather than about his queer ambitions. She was no more interested now.

"Ollie, what does your father say about all this?" she finally asked in a perfunctory way. "Would he be willing for you to be a painter?" It bored her to listen to Oliver's enthusiastic talk about light and shade, and color and perspective, and what Mr. Crocker had said and what Mr. Crocker was doing, and what Mr. Crocker's last portrait was like. She was sure that nobody else around Kennedy Square talked of such things or had such curious ambitions. They shocked her as much as Oliver's wearing some outlandish clothes would have done, making him conspicuous and perhaps an object of ridicule.

"Father's all right, Sue. He's always right," Oliver answered. "He believes in Mr.

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Crocker, just as he believes in a lot of things that a good many people around here don't understand. He believes the time will come when they will value his pictures, and be proud to own them. But I don't care who owns mine. I just want the fun of painting them. Just think of what a man can do with a few tubes of color, a brush, and a bit of canvas. So I don't care if they never buy what I paint. I can get along somehow, just as Mr. Crocker does. He's poor, but just see how happy he is! Why, when he does a good thing he's nothing but a boy, he's so glad about it. I always know how his work has gone when I see his face.'

"But, Ollie, he's so shabby, and his daughter gives music lessons. Nobody *thinks* of inviting her anywhere." Sue's eyes were shut tight, with an expression of assumed contempt, and her little nose was straight up.

"Yes, but that doesn't hurt his pictures, Sue." There was a slight trace of impatience in Oliver's tone.

"Well, perhaps it doesn't, but you don't want to be like him. I wouldn't like to see you, Ollie, going about with a picture under your arm that everybody knew you had painted

to buy your pictures? How would you feel, now, to be taking other people's money for things you had painted?"

The boy caught his breath. It seemed useless to pursue the talk with Sue. She evidently had no sympathy with his aspirations.

"No, but I wish I could paint as he does," he answered mechanically.

Sue saw the change in his manner. She realized, too, that she had hurt him in some way. She drew nearer and put her hand on his arm.

"Why, you can, Ollie! You can do anything you want to; Miss Lavinia told me so." The little witch was mistress of one art, that of holding her lover, but that was an art of which all the girls about Kennedy Square approved.

"No, I can't," he replied, forgetting in the caressing touch of her hand the tribute to his ability, and delighted that she was once more in sympathy with him. "Mother would n't think of my being an artist. She does n't understand how I feel about it, and Miss Lavinia, somehow, does n't seem to be favorable to it either. I've talked to her lots of times. She was more encouraging at first, but she does n't seem to like the idea now. I've been hoping she'd fix it so I could speak to mother about

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it. Now she tells me I had better wait. I can't see why. Miss Lavinia knows what an artist's life can be, for she knew plenty of painters when she was in London with her father; and she loves pictures, too, and is a good judge nobody here any better. She told me only a week ago how much one of these Englishmen was paid for a little thing as big as your hand, but I've forgotten the amount. I don't see why I can't paint as well as those fellows. Do you know, Sue, I'm beginning to think that about half the people in Kennedy Square are asleep? They really don't seem to think there is anything respectable but the law. If they are right, how about all the men who painted the great pictures and built all the cathedrals, or the men who wrote all the poems and histories? Mother, of course, wants me to be a lawyer. Because I'm fitted for it? — not a bit of it! Simply because father was one before me, and his father before him, and Uncle John Tilghman another, and so on, back to the Deluge."

Sue drew away a little and turned her head toward the Square, as if in search of some one. Oliver noticed the movement, and his heart sank again. He saw but too clearly how little impression the story of his ambitions had made upon her. Then the thought flashed into his

mind that he might have offended her in some way, clashing against her traditions and her prejudices as he had done. He bent toward her and laid his hand in hers.

"Little girl," he said in a softened tone, "I can't make you unhappy too. Mother is enough for me to worry about. I have n't talked it all out to you before, but don't you get a wrong idea of what I'm going to do," and he looked up into her face and tightened his hold upon her fingers, his eyes never wavering from her own.

The girl allowed his hand to remain an instant, then quickly withdrew her own and started up. Coyness is sometimes fear in the timid heart that is stepping into the charmed circle for the first time.

"There goes Ella Dorsey and Jack!" she cried, springing down the steps. "Ella! El-la!" and an answering halloo came back, and the two started from Malachi's steps and raced up the street to join their young friends.

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RETTY Sue Clayton, with her ringlets and rosy cheeks, had not been Oliver's only listener.

His mother had been sitting inside the drawing-room, just beside the open window. She had spoken to Sue and Oliver when they first mounted the steps, and had begged them both to come in, but they had forgotten her presence. Unintentionally, therefore, she had heard every word of the conversation. Her old fears rushed over her again with renewed force. She had never for a moment supposed that Oliver wanted to be a painter like Mr. Crocker! Now at last she understood his real object in talking to Lavinia the night of the musicale.

"Richard," she called softly to her husband, sitting in the adjoining room, in the chair that Malachi, in accordance with the old custom, had with his sweeping bow made ready for him. The inventor had been there since tea was over, lying back in his seat, his head resting

on his hand. He had had one of his thoughtful days, worrying over some detail of his machine, still incomplete. The new device of which he had told her with such glee had failed, as had the others. The motor was still incomplete.

"Richard," she repeated.

"Yes, my dear," he answered in his gentle voice. He had not heard her at first.

"Bring your chair over here."

The inventor rose instantly and, crossing the room, took a seat beside her, his hand finding hers in the dark.

"What is this you have been saying to Oliver about artists being great men?" she asked. "He's got a new idea in his head now; he wants to be a painter. I've thought for some time that Mr. Crocker was not a proper person for him to be so much with. He has evidently worked on the boy's imagination until he has determined to give up the law and study art."

"How do you know?"

"I've just heard him tell Sue Clayton so. All he wants now is my consent; he says he has yours."

The inventor paused, and gently smoothed his wife's fingers with his own.

"And you would not give it?" he inquired.

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"How could I? It would ruin him — don't you know it?" There was a slight tinge of annoyance in her voice, — not one of fault-finding, but rather of anxiety.

"That depends, my dear, on how well he could succeed," he answered gently.

"Why, Richard!" She withdrew her hand quickly from his caressing touch, and looked at him in undisguised astonishment. "What has his succeeding to do with it? Surely you cannot be in earnest? I am willing he should do anything to make his living, but not that. No one we know has ever been a painter. It is neither respectable nor profitable. You see what a dreadful existence Mr. Crocker leads—hardly an associate in town, and no acquaintances for his daughter; and he's been painting ever since he was a boy. Oliver could not earn a penny at such work."

"Money is not everything, my dear, nor social recognition. There are many things I would value more."

"What are they?" She was facing him now, her brows knit, a marked antagonism in her voice.

"Good manners and good taste, Sallie, and kindly consideration for another's feelings," he answered. He spoke calmly and kindly, as was his custom. He had lived almost all his life

with this high-strung Sallie Horn, whose eyes flashed now and then as they had done in the old days when he won her hand. He knew every side of her temperament. "Good manners and good taste," he repeated, as if wishing to emphasize his thoughts. "Oliver has all of these, and he has, besides, loyalty to his friends. He never speaks of Mr. Crocker but with affection, and I love to hear him. That man is an artist of great talent, and yet it seems to be the fashion in this town to ridicule him. If Ollie has any gifts which would fit him to be a painter, I should be delighted to see him a painter. It is a profession despised now, as are many others, but it is the profession of a gentleman, for all they say, and a noble one!" Then he stopped and said thoughtfully, as if communing with himself, "I wish he could be a painter. Since Gilbert Stuart's time we have had so few men of whom we can boast. This country will one day be proud to honor her artists."

Mrs. Horn sank back in her chair. She felt the hopelessness of all further discussion with her husband. "He would not have talked this way ten years ago," she said to herself. "Everything has gone wrong since he left the law." But to her husband she said,—

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"You always measure everything by your hopes, Richard, and you never look at the practical side of anything. Ollie is old enough to begin to think how he will earn his bread. I see now how hopeless it is for us to try and make a lawyer of him -- his heart is not in it. I have come little by little to the conclusion that what he wants most is hard work, and he wants it right away, just as soon as we can find something for him to do - something with his hands, if necessary, not something full of dreams and imaginings," and her voice rose in its earnestness. "I am getting more and more anxious about him every day," she added, suddenly controlling herself, "and when you encourage him in foolish vagaries you only make it harder for me, dear," and her voice softened and broke with emotion.

"He ought to have gone into the laboratory, Sallie," Richard added quickly, in a reflective tone, laying his hand on her shoulder as he noticed the change of voice, "just as I wanted him to do when he left school. There is a future for scientific men in this country which you do not see—a future which few around me seem to see. Great changes are coming, not only in science, but in the arts and in all useful knowledge. If Ollie can add to the bril-

liancy of this future by becoming a brilliant painter, able to help educate those about him, there could be no higher calling for him. Three things are coming, my dear, perhaps four" (the inventor had risen from his seat and stood beside her, his eyes turned away into the dark as if he were addressing some unseen person): "the superseding of steam, aërial locomotion, and the education of the common people, black and white. One other may come, the freeing of the slaves, but the others are sure. Science. not money nor family traditions nor questions of birth, will shape the destinies of the country. We may not live to see it, but Oliver will, and I want him to be where he can help on the movement. You were opposed to his becoming a scientist, and I feel assured made a mistake. Don't stand in his way again, dear."

"Yes, Richard, I was opposed to it, because I did not want him to waste his time over all sorts of foolish experiments, which would certainly" — She did not finish the sentence. Her anxiety had not yet gone so far as that. With a quick gesture she rose from her chair, and drawing her white gossamer shawl about her shoulders, left the room and walked out on to the front steps, followed by Richard.

If the inventor heard the thrust, he did not

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reply. He would not argue with his wife over it, nor did it check the flow of his courtesy. She had never seen the value of what he was striving for, but she would in time, he knew.

"Yes, I think it is cooler out here," was all he said, as he placed a cushion to soften her seat on the threshold. When he had arranged another pillow behind her back and hunted round the dark parlor for a stool for her feet, he found a chair for himself and sat down beside her. She thanked him, but her thoughts were evidently far away. She was weighing in her mind what must be her next move if Oliver persisted in this new departure. Richard broke the silence.

"I have n't told you of the good offer I've had for the farm, Sallie."

"No, but we're not going to sell it, of course." She was leaning back against the jamb of the door as she spoke, the shawl hanging loose, her delicate white hands in her lap. It was an idle answer to an idle question, for her mind was still with Oliver.

"Well, I had n't thought of doing so until to-day," he answered slowly, "but I had a notice from the bank that they must call in the mortgage, and so I thought I might as well sell

the whole place, pay off the debt, and use the balance for "—

"Sell the farm, Richard?" It was her hand now that sought his, and with a firm grasp, as if she would restrain him then and there in his purpose.

"Yes, I can get several thousand dollars over and above the mortgage, and I need the money, Sallie. It will only be a temporary matter," and he smoothed her arm tenderly, speaking as a lover of long standing might do, who is less absorbed with the caress than with the subject under discussion. "The motor will be ready in a few weeks, as soon as the new batteries are finished. Then, my dear, you won't have to curtail your expenses as you have done." His voice was full of hope now, a smile lighting his face as he thought of all the pleasure and comfort his success would bring her.

"But you said that same thing when you were working on the steam valve, for which you put that very mortgage on the farm; and now that's all gone and'"—

"The failure of the steam valve, as I have always told you, was due to my own carelessness, Sallie. I should have patented it sooner. They are making enormous sums on it, I hear, and are using my cut-off, and I think dishon-

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estly. But the motor has been protected at every new step that I have taken. My first patent of August 13, 1856, supersedes all others, and cannot be shaken. Now, my dear, don't worry about it. You have never known me to fail, and I won't now. Besides, you forget my successes, Sallie, — the turbine water-wheel and the others. It will all come right."

"It will never come right." She had risen from her seat and was standing over him, both hands on his shoulders, her eyes looking down into his, her voice trembling. "Oh, Richard, Richard! Give up this life of dreams you are living, and go back to your law office. You always succeeded in the law. This new career of yours is ruining us. I can economize, dear, just as I have always done," she added, with another sudden change of tone, bending over him and slipping her hand caressingly into his. "I will do everything to help you. I did not mean to be cross a moment ago. I was worried about Oliver's talk. I have been silent so long -I must speak. Don't be angry, dear, but you must keep the farm. I will go myself and see about the mortgage at the bank. We cannot — we must not — go on this way — we will have nothing left."

He patted her arm again in his gentle way,

not to calm her fears, — he knew so well that she was wrong, — but to quiet the nerves that he thought unstrung.

"But I need this extra money for some improvements which I"—

"Yes, I know you think so, but you don't, Richard, you don't. For Heaven's sake, throw the motor out into the street, and be done with it! It will ruin us all if things go on as they have done!"

The inventor raised his eyes quickly. He had never seen her so disturbed in all their married life. She had never spoken in this way before.

"Don't excite yourself, Sallie," he said gravely, and with a certain air of authority in his manner. "You'll bring on one of your headaches. It will all come right. Come, my dear, let us go into the house. People are passing, and will wonder."

She followed him back into the drawing-room, his hand still held fast in hers.

"Promise me one thing," she said, stopping at the door and looking up into his eyes, "and I won't say another word. Please do nothing more about the farm unless you let me know. Let me think first how I can help. It will all come out right, as you say; but it will be be-

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cause we will make it come right, dear." She drew his face down toward her with one hand, and kissed him tenderly on his cheek. Then she bade him good-night and resumed her seat by the window, to watch for Oliver's return.

Try as she would, she could not banish her fears. The news of Richard's intention to pay off the loan by selling the farm had sent a shudder through her heart such as she had never before experienced, for that which she had dreaded had come to pass. Loyal as she had always been to her husband, and proud as she was of his genius and accomplishments, and sympathetic as they were in all else that their lives touched upon, her keen, penetrating mind had long since divined the principal fault that lay at the bottom of her husband's genius. She saw that the weak point in his make-up was not his inventive quality, but his inability to realize any practical results from his inventions when perfected. She saw, too, with equal certainty how rapidly their already slender means were being daily depleted in costly experiments, many of which were abandoned as soon as tried; and she knew full well that the end was but a question of time. Even when he had abandoned the law, and had exchanged his office near the Court House for his shop in the

back yard, and had given his library to his young students, she had not despaired; she still had faith in his genius.

She had first become uneasy when the new steam cut-off had failed to reimburse him. When this catastrophe was followed by his losing every dollar of his interest in the improved cotton-gin, because of his generosity to a brother inventor, her uneasiness had become the keenest anxiety. And now here was this new motor, in which he seemed more absorbed than in any other of his inventions. This was to plunge them into still greater difficulties and jeopardize even the farm.

Richard had not been disturbed by it all. Serene and hopeful always, the money question had counted for nothing with him. His compensation lay in the fact that his theories had been proved true. Moreover, there were, he knew, other inventions ahead, and more important discoveries to be made. If money were necessary, these new inventions would supply it. Such indifference to practical questions was an agony to one of her temperament, burdened as she was by the thought of their increasing daily expenses, the magnitude of which Richard never seemed to appreciate.

And yet until to-night, when Richard had made his announcement about the mortgage,

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she had made no protest, uttered no word of censure. Neither had any jar or discord ever disturbed the sweet harmony of their home life. And she had only behaved as any other wife in Kennedy Square would have done in like circumstances. Remonstrances against a husband's business methods were never made in the best families. In his own house Richard was master. So she had suffered on and held her peace. while Richard walked with his head in the clouds, unconscious of her doubts. The situation must now be met, and she determined to face it with all her might. "The farm shall not be sacrificed, if I can help it," she kept repeating to herself; "any economy is better than that disaster."

When at last the shock of the news of the threatened disaster had passed, and she had regained her customary composure, she decided to act at once and at headquarters, outside of Richard's help or knowledge. She would send for Colonel Clayton, one of the directors of the bank, in the morning, and see what could be done to postpone for a time the bank's action. This would give her time to think what next could best be done to save the property. This settled in her mind, she gave herself up to the more important and pressing need of the mo-

ment, the dissuading of Oliver from this new act of folly.

At the end of an hour she was still sitting by the drawing-room window, straining her eyes across the Square, noting every figure that passed into the radiance of the moonlight, her mind becoming clearer as her indomitable will, which had never failed her in domestic crises, began to assert itself.

When her eye fell at last upon her son, he was walking with swinging gait up the long path across the Square, whistling as he came, his straw hat tilted on one side, his short coat flying free. He had taken Sue home, and the two had sat on her father's steps in the moonlight long after the other boys and girls had scattered to their homes. The colonel had come in while they were talking, and had bade them good-night and gone up to bed.

Girl as she was, Sue already possessed that subtle power of unconscious coquetry which has distinguished all the other Sue Claytons of all the other Kennedy Squares the South over since the days of Pocahontas. She had kept Oliver's mind away from the subject that engrossed him, and on herself; and when at last, standing between the big columns of the portico, she had waved her hand good-night, and had gained his

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promise to stop in the morning on his way to the office, for just another word, she felt sure that his every thought was of her. Then she had closed the big front door, - she was the last person in the house awake, — and tripped upstairs, not lighting her candle until she had peeped through her shutters, and had found him standing on the other side of the street, looking toward the house. He made a handsome picture of a lover, as he stood in the moonlight, and Sue smiled complacently to herself at the delicate attention paid her; but Oliver's eves, the scribe is ashamed to say, were not fixed on the particular pair of green blinds that concealed this adorable young lady, -certainly not with any desire to break through their privacy. One of the unforgivable sins - nay, one of the impossible sins — about Kennedy Square would have been to have recognized a lady who looked, even during the daytime, out from a bedroom window, much less at night. That was why Sue did not open her blinds.

Nor, indeed, was Oliver occupied with the question of Sue's blinds at all. He had for the moment, in fact, completely forgotten the existence of his lady-love. He was, if the truth must be told, studying the wonderful effect of the white light of the moon flooding with its

radiance the columns and roof of the Clayton house, the dark magnolias silhouetted against the flight of steps and the indigo blue of the sky. He had already formulated in his mind the palette with which he would paint it, and had decided that the magnolias were blue black and not green, and the steps greenish white. He had, furthermore, determined to make an outline of it in the daylight, and talk to Mr. Crocker about it. Sue's eyes, which but a moment before had so charmed him, no longer lingered in his memory, nor even in any one of the far corners of his head and heart. It was only when her light flashed up that he awoke to the realization of what he was doing, and even this breach of good manners was forgotten by him in his delight over the effect which the red glow of the candle gave to the whole composition.

With the picture clearly stamped upon his brain, he turned and stepped quickly across the Square, and in another moment he had thrown his mother a kiss through the window, and rushing inside had caught her in his arms.

"Poor motherkins—and you all alone!" he cried. "Why, I thought you and father had gone to bed long ago."

"No, son, I was waiting for you." He laid

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his fresh young face against hers, insisting that she must go to bed at once, helping her upstairs awkwardly, laughing as he went, telling her she was the sweetest girl he ever knew, and his best sweetheart, kissing her pale cheeks as they climbed the steps together to his room.

She had determined, as she sat by the window, to talk to him of what she had overheard him say to Sue, and of her anxiety over Richard's revelations, but his joyous kiss had robbed her of the power. She would wait for another time, she said to herself, — not to-night, when he was so happy.

"Anybody at Sue's, Ollie?" she asked,

lighting his candle.

"Only the boys and girls, — Tom Pitts, Charley Bowman, Nellie Talbot, and one or two others. The colonel came in just before I left."

"But the colonel will be home to-morrow, will he not?" she asked quickly, as if something forgotten had been suddenly remembered.

"Yes — think so," answered Oliver, taking off his coat and hanging it over the chair, "because he was just up from Pongateague. He and Major Pitts got thirty-seven woodcock in two days. Tom wants me to go down with him some day next week."

A shade of anxiety crossed the mother's face.

- "What did you tell him, son?" She moved a chair nearer the bureau and sat down to watch him undress, as she had always done since the day she first tucked him into his crib.
- "Oh, I said I would ask you." He was loosening his cravat, his chin thrown up, the light of the candle falling over his well-knit shoulders and chest, outlined through his white shirt.
- "Better not go, Ollie; you've been away so much lately."
- "Oh, dearie," he protested, in a tone as a child would have done, "what does a day or two matter? Be a darling old mother and let me go. Tom has a gun for me, and Mr. Talbot is going to lend us his red setter. Tom's sister is going, too, and so are her cousins. Just think, now; I have n't had a day in the country for a coon's age." His arms were round her neck now. He seemed happier over the excuse to caress her than anxious about her possible refusal.

She loosened one of his hands and laid it on her cheek.

"No holidays, son? Why, you had two last week, when you all went out to Stemmer's

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Run," she said, looking up into his face, his hand still in hers.

"Yes, but that was fishing!" he laughed, as he waved an imaginary rod in his hands.

"And the week before, when you spent the day at Uncle Tilghman's?" she continued, smiling sadly at him, but with the light of an ill-concealed admiration on her face.

"Ah, but, mother, I went to see the Lely! That's an education. Oh, that portrait in pink!" He was serious now, looking straight down into her eyes, talking with his hands, one thumb in air as if it were a bit of charcoal and he was outlining the Lely on an equally real canvas. "Such color, mother! Such an exquisite poise of the head and sweep to the shoulder!" And the thumb described a curve in the air as if following every turn of Lely's brush.

Her eyes followed his gestures. She loved his enthusiasm, although she wished it had been about something else.

"And you don't get any education out of the judge's law-books?"

"No, I wish I did." The joyous look on his face was gone now, his hand had fallen to his side. "It gets to be more of a muddle every day;" and then he added, with the illogical

reasoning of youth, "all the lawyers that ever lived could n't paint a picture like the Lely."

Mrs. Horn closed her eyes. It was on her tongue to tell him she knew what was in his heart, but she stopped. No, not to-night, she said firmly to herself, and shut her lips tight, a way she had of bracing her nerves in such emergencies.

Oliver in turn saw the expression of anxiety that crossed his mother's face, and the thin drawn line of the lips. One word from her and he would have poured out his heart. Then some shadow that crossed her face silenced him. "No, not to-night," he said to himself. "She has been sitting up for me and is tired. I'll tell her to-morrow."

"Don't go with Tom Pitts, my son," she said calmly. "I'd rather you'd stay; I don't want you to go this time; perhaps a little later," and a slight shiver went through her as she rose from her chair and moved toward him.

He made no protest. Her final word was always law to him, not because she dominated him, but because his nature was always to be in harmony with the thing he loved. Because, too, underneath it all was that quality of tenderness to all women, old and young, which

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forbade him to cause one of them pain. Almost unconsciously to himself he had gone through a process by which from having yielded her the obedience of a child, he now surrendered to her the pleasures of his youth when the old feeling of maternal dominance still controlled her in her attitude to him. She did not recognize the difference, and he had but half perceived it; but the difference had already transformed him from a boy into a man, though with unrecognized powers of stability as yet. In obeying his mother, then, at twenty-two, or even in meeting the whims and conceits of his sweethearts, this quality of tenderness to the woman was always uppermost in his heart. The surrender of a moment's pleasure seemed so little to him compared to the expression of pain he could see cross their faces. He had so much to make him happy — what mattered it if out of a life so full he should give up any one thing to please his mother?

Patting him on the cheek and kissing him on the neck, as she had so often done when some sudden wave of affection overwhelmed her, she bade him good-night at last.

Once outside in the old-fashioned hall, she stopped for a moment, her eyes fixed on the floor, the light from the hall lamp shining on

her silver hair and the shawl about her shoulders, and said slowly to herself, as if counting each word, —

"What — can I do — to save this boy — from — himself?"

ICHARD, when he waked, made no allusion to the mortgage nor to his promise the night before, to take no steps in the matter without her consent, nor could Mrs. Horn see that the inventor had given the subject further thought. He came in to breakfast with his usual serenity of mien, kissed her gallantly on the cheek, - in all their married life this dear old gentleman had never forgotten this breakfast kiss, — and taking his seat opposite her, he picked up the new "Scientific Review," just in by the morning mail, and began cutting the leaves. She tried to draw him into conversation by asking him when the note on the mortgage was due, but his mind was doubtless absorbed by some problem suggested by the Review before him, for without answering he of course had not heard her - he rose from his chair, excused himself for a moment, opened a book in his library, studied it leisurely, and only resumed his seat when Malachi gently touched his elbow and said. —

"Coffee purty nigh done sp'ilt, Marse Richard."

Breakfast over, Richard picked up his letters, and with that far-away look in his eyes which his wife knew so well, walked to the closet, took down his long red calico gown, slipped it over his coat, and with a loving pat on his wife's shoulder as he passed, and with the request that no one but Nathan should see him that morning, made his way through the damp brick-paved back yard to the green door of his "li'l" room.

Mrs. Horn watched his retreating figure from the window, his head bent, his soft hair, stirred by the morning air, falling about his shoulders. His serenity, his air of abstraction, — of being wrapped in the clouds, as it were, borne aloft by the power of a thought altogether beyond her, — baffled her, as it always did. She could not follow his flights when he was in one of these uplifted moods. She could only watch and wait until he returned again to the common ground of their daily love and companionship.

Brushing a quick tear from her eyes with an impatient sigh, she directed Malachi to go to Oliver's room and tell him he must get up at once, as she wanted him to carry a message of importance. She had herself rapped at her son's

door as she passed on her way downstairs, and Malachi had already paid two visits to the same portal, — one with Oliver's shoes and one on his own account. He had seen his mistress's anxiety, and knowing that his young master had come in late the night before, had mistaken the cause, charging Mrs. Horn's perturbation to Oliver's account. The only response Oliver had made to either of his warnings had been a smothered yawn and a protest at being called at daylight. On his third visit Malachi was more insistent, the hall clock by that time having struck nine.

"Ain't you out 'n dat bed yit, Marse Oliver?
Dis yere 's de third time I been yere. Better

git up; yo' ma's gittin' onres'less."

"Coming, Mally. Tell mother I'll be down right away," called Oliver, springing out of bed. Malachi stepped softly downstairs again, bowed low to his mistress, and with a perfectly straight face said, —

"He's mos' ready, mistis. Jes' a-breshin' ob his ha'r when I opened de do'. Spec Marse Oliver overslep' hisse'f, or maybe nobody ain't

call him."

He could not bear to hear the boy scolded. He had begun to shield his young master in the days when he carried him on his shoulder, and

he would still shade the truth for him whenever he considered necessity required it.

When Oliver at last came downstairs, it was by means of the hand-rail as a slide, a dash through the hall, and a bound into the breakfast room, followed by a joyous good-morning,—meeting his mother's "How could you be so late, my boy?" without any defence of his conduct, putting one hand under her chin and the other around her neck, and kissing her where her white hair parted over her forehead.

Malachi waited an instant, breathing freer when he found that his statement regarding Oliver's toilet had passed muster, and then shuffled off to the kitchen for hot waffles and certain other comforting viands that Aunt Hannah, the cook, had kept hot for her young master, Malachi's several reports having confirmed her suspicions that Oliver, as usual, would be half an hour late.

"What a morning, motherkins!" Oliver cried. "Such a sky, all china blue and white! Oh, you just ought to see how fine the old church looms up behind the trees. I'm going to paint that some day, from my window. Dad had his breakfast?" and he glanced at the empty seat and plate. "Sausage, eh? Mally, got any for me?" and he dragged up his chair

beside her, talking all the time as he spread his napkin and drew the dishes toward him.

He never once noticed her anxious face, he was so full of his own buoyant happiness. She did not check his enthusiasm. This breakfast hour alone with her boy — he was almost always later than Richard — was the happiest of the day; but her heart was too heavy this morning to enjoy it. Instead of listening with her smile of quiet satisfaction, answering him now and then with a gayety of humor which matched his own, she was conscious only of the waiting for an opportunity to break into his talk without jarring upon his mood. At last, with a hesitating emphasis that would have alarmed any one less wrapped in his own content than her son, she said, —

"Ollie, when you finish your breakfast I want you, on your way to Judge Ellicott's office, to stop at Colonel Clayton's and ask him to be good enough to come and see me as soon as he can on a little matter of business. Tell him I will keep him but a minute. If you hurry, my son, you'll catch him before he leaves the house."

The die was cast now. She had taken her first step without Richard's hand to guide her,—the first in all her life. It was pain to do it,

the more exquisite because she loved to turn to him for guidance or relief, to feel the sense of his protection. Heretofore he had helped her in every domestic emergency, his soft, gentle hand soothing and quieting her when troubles arose. She had wavered during the night between her duty to her family, in saving the farm, and her duty to her husband, in preserving unbroken the tie of loyal dependence that had always bound them together. Many emotions had shaken her as she lay awake, - her eyes fixed on the flutings in the canopy of the highpost bedstead, which the night lamp faintly illumined; Richard asleep beside her, dreaming doubtless of cogs and pulleys, and for the hundredth time of his finding the one connecting link needed to complete the chain of his success.

But before the day had broken, her keen, penetrating mind had cut through the fog of her doubts. Come what may, the farm should never be given up. Richard, for all his urgent need of money to perfect his new motor, should not be allowed to sacrifice this, the only piece of landed property which they possessed, except the roof that sheltered them all. The farm saved, she would give her attention to Oliver's future career. On one point her mind was firmly

made up, - he should never, in spite of what his father said, become a painter.

Oliver hurried through his breakfast, cut short Malachi's second relay of waffles, to the great disappointment of that excellent servitor, and with his mother's message for the moment firmly fixed in his mind, tilted his hat on one side of his head and started across Kennedy Square, whistling as he went.

Mrs. Horn moved her seat to the window and looked out upon the brick-paved yard. The door of the shop was shut. Richard was already at work, for a thin curl of blue smoke was rising from the chimney. As she sat looking out upon the tulip-tree and the ivy-covered wall beyond, a strange, unaccountable sense of loneliness new in her experience came over her. The lines about her mouth settled more firmly, and the anxious look that had filled her eyes changed to one of determination.

"Nobody can help," she said to herself, with a sigh. "I must do it all myself;" and picking up her basket of keys, she mounted slowly

to her room.

Once outside the front door, with the fresh, clear air stirring to a silver white the leaves of the maples, the birds singing in the branches and the sky glistening overhead, one of those

sudden changes of mood to which our young hero was subject swept over him. The picture of the dear mother whom he loved, and whose anxious face had at last filled his thoughts, by some shifting of the gray matter of this volatile young gentleman's brain had suddenly become replaced by another.

Pretty Sue Clayton, her black eyes snapping with fun, her hand so soon to be outstretched in welcome, was now the dominating figure in his mental horizon. Even Sir Peter Lely's girl in pink and the woodcock-shooting with Tom Pitts, and all the other delights that had filled his brain, had become things of the past as he thought of Sue's greeting. For the time being this black-eyed little witch with the ringlets about her face had complete possession of him.

He had not thought of her, it is true, for five consecutive minutes since he had bidden her good-night ten hours ago; and he would, I am quite sure, have forgotten even his promise to see her this morning, had not his mother's message made his going to her house imperative. And yet, now that the prospect of having a glimpse of her face was assured, he could hardly wait until he reached her side.

Not that he had some new thing to tell her,

something that had bubbled up fresh from the depths of his heart over night. Indeed, had that portion of this young gentleman's anatomy been searched with a dark lantern, it can safely be said that not the slightest suggestion of this fair inamorata's form or lineaments would have been found lurking in any one of its recesses. Furthermore, I can state positively - and I knew this young gentleman quite well at the time — that it was not Sue at all that he longed for at this precise moment, even though he hurried to meet her. It was more the woman in her, the something that satisfied his inner nature when he was with her, — her coy touches of confidence, her artless outbursts of admiration, looking up in his face as she spoke, the dimples playing about the corners of her mouth. He revelled in all those subtle flatteries and cajoleries, and in all the arts to please of which she was past mistress. He loved to believe her she intended that he should - when she told him how different he was from anybody about Kennedy Square, and how nobody swam or rode or danced as he did; nor wore their hair so becomingly, nor their clothes, especially the gray jacket buttoned up close under the chin, nor carried themselves as they walked, nor —

Why go on? We all know exactly how she

said it, and how sincere she seemed, and how we believed it all (and do now, some of us), and how blissful it was to sit beside her and hear her voice, and know that this most adorable of women really believed that the very sun itself rose and set in our own adorable persons.

Because of all this and of many other things with which we have nothing to do, our young hero saw only Sue's eyes when that maiden, who had been watching for him at the library window, laid her hand on the lapel of his coat in her coaxing way. No wonder he had forgotten everything which his mother had asked him to do. I can forgive him under the circumstances—and so can you. Soft hands are very beguiling, sometimes—and half-closed lids—Well! It is a good many years ago, but there are some things that none of us ever forget.

Blinded by such fascinations, it is not at all astonishing that long before Oliver regained his senses the colonel had left the house for the day. That distinguished gentleman would, no doubt, have waited the young prince's pleasure in his library had he known of his errand. But since the colonel had unfortunately taken himself off, there was nothing, of course, for our Oliver to do but to remain where he was until noon—this was Sue's way out of the difficulty—

and then to catch the colonel at the bank, where he could always be found between twelve and one o'clock, or where Mr. Stiger, the cashier, could lay his hands on him if he was anywhere in the neighborhood, — a suggestion of Sue's which at once relieved Oliver from further anxiety, Mr. Stiger being one of his oldest and dearest friends.

By the time, however, that Oliver had reached the bank, the colonel had left for the club, where he would have been too happy, no doubt — being the most courteous of colonels, etc., etc. — "if his dear young friend had only sent him word," etc.

All this our breathless young Mercury — Oliver never walked when he could run — learned some hours later from old Mr. Stiger, the cashier, who punched him in the ribs at the end of every sentence in which he conveyed the disappointing information, calling him "Creeps," at short intervals, and roaring with laughter at the boy's account of the causes leading up to his missing the colonel.

"Gone to the club, Creeps, don't I tell you (punch in the ribs); gone to get a little sip of madeira and a little bit of woodcock (punch over the heart), and a little — oh, I tell you, you young dog (this punch straight on the

breast bone), you ought to be a bank director, you hear!—a big fat bank director, and own a big house up in the Square, if you want to enjoy yourself—and have a pretty daughter—Oh, you young rascal!" This last punch bent Oliver double, and was followed by an outburst of uncontrollable laughter from Stiger.

These same punchings and outbursts had gone on since the days that Oliver was in short trousers and Stiger was superintendent of the Sunday school which the boy had attended in his early years - Stiger was still superintendent, and of the same school: cashiers had to have certificates of character in those days. A smooth-shaven, round-headed old fellow was Stiger, with two little dabs of side whiskers, a pair of eyes that twinkled behind a pair of gold spectacles, and a bald head kept polished by the constant mopping of a red silk handkerchief. His costume in the bank was a black alpaca coat and high black satin stock, which grabbed him tight around the neck, and held in place the two points of his white collar struggling to be free. Across his waist-line was a square of cloth. This, in summer, replaced his waistcoat, and in winter protected it from being rubbed into holes by constant contact with the edge of the counter.

His intimacy with Oliver dated from one hot Sunday morning years before, when Oliver had broken in upon the old gentleman's long prayers by sundry scrapings of his finger nails down the whitewashed wall of the schoolroom, producing a blood-cooling and most irreverent sound, much to the discomfort of the worshippers.

"Who made that noise?" asked Mr. Stiger, when the amen was reached.

"Me, sir."

"What for?"

"To get cool. It makes creeps go down my back."

From that day the old cashier had never called Oliver anything but "Creeps."

Oliver, in a spirit of playful revenge, made caricatures of his persecutor in these later years, enlarging his nose, puffing out his cheeks, and dressing him up in impossible clothes. These sketches he would mail to the cashier as anonymous communications, always stopping at the bank the next day to see how Stiger enjoyed them. He generally found them tacked up over the cashier's desk. Some of them were still there when Stiger died.

Carried away by the warm greetings of the old cashier, and the hearty, whole-souled spirit of companionship inherent in the man, a spirit

always dear to Oliver, he not only stayed to make another caricature of the old fellow, over which the original laughed until the tears ran down his fat cheeks, but until all the old sketches were once more taken from the drawer or examined on the wall and laughed at over again, Stiger praising him for his cleverness and predicting all kinds of honors and distinctions for him when his talents became recognized. It was just the atmosphere of general approval in which our young hero loved to bask, and again the hours slipped away and three o'clock came and went, and his mother's message was still undelivered. Nor had he been at Judge Ellicott's office. This fact was not impressed upon him by the moon-faced clock that hung over the cashier's desk, — time made no difference to Oliver, — but by the cashier himself, who began stuffing the big books into a great safe built into the wall, preparatory to locking it with a key that could have opened the gate of a walled town, and which the old gentleman took home with him every night and hung on a nail by his bed.

Thus it came to pass that another half hour had struck before Oliver mounted the steps of the Chesapeake Club in search of the elusive colonel.

The fat, mahogany-colored porter, who sat all day in the doorway of the club, dozing in his lobster-shell Bath chair, answered his next inquiry. This ancient relic, who always boasted that no gentleman member of the club, dead or alive, could pass him without being recognized, listened to Oliver's request with a certain lifeless air, — a manner always shown to strangers, — and shuffled away to the reading-room to find the colonel.

The occupant of this Bath chair was not only one of the characters of the club but one of the characters of the town. He was a squat, brokenkneed old darky, with white eyebrows arching over big brass spectacles, a flat nose, and two keen, restless monkey eyes. His hands, like those of many negroes of his age, were long and shrivelled, the palms wrinkled as the inside of a turkey's foot, and of the same color and texture. His two feet, always in evidence, rested on their heels, and were generally encased in carpet slippers - shoes being out of the question, owing to his lifelong habit of storing inside his own person the drainings of the decanters, an idiosyncrasy which produced a form of gout that only carpet slippers could alleviate. In his earlier life he had carried General Washington around in his arms, had waited

on Henry Clay, and had been body servant to Lafayette, besides holding the horses of half the generals of the War of 1812, — at least, he said so, and no man of his color dared contradict him.

The years of service of this guardian of the front door dated back to the time when the Chippendale furniture of Colonel Ralph Coston, together with many of the portraits covering the walls, and the silver chafing dishes lining the sideboard, had come into the possession of the club through that gentleman's last will and testament. Coston was the most beloved of all the epicures of his time, and his famous terrapin stew, one of the marvellous delicacies of the period, had been cooked in these same chafing dishes. The mahogany-colored Cerberus had been Coston's slave as well as butler, and still belonged to the estate. It was eminently proper, therefore, that he should still maintain his position at the club as long as his feet held out.

While he was gone in search of the colonel, Oliver occupied himself for a moment in examining one of the old English sporting prints that ornamented the side walls of the bare, uncarpeted, dismal hall. It was the second time that he had entered these sacred doors. Few men of his own age had ever done as much. He had

stopped there once before in search of his father, when his mother had been taken suddenly ill. He recalled again the curious spiral staircase at the end of the hall, where his father had met him, and which had impressed him so at the time. He could see, too, the open closet out of which Mr. Horn had taken his overcoat, and which was now half filled with hats and coats.

From the desolate, uninviting hall, Oliver passed into the large meeting-room of the club, fronting the street, now filled with members, many of whom had dropped in for half an hour on their way back to their offices. Of these, some of the older and more sedate men, like Judge Bowman and Mr. Pancoast, were playing chess; others were seated about the small tables, reading, sipping toddies, or chatting together. A few of the younger bloods, men of forty or thereabouts, were standing by the uncurtained windows, watching the belles of the town in their flounced dresses and wide leghorn hats, out for an afternoon visit or promenade. Among these men Oliver recognized Howard Thom, son of the chief justice, poor as a church mouse, and fifty years of age, if a day. Oliver was not surprised to find Thom craning his neck at the window. He remembered the story they told of this perennial beau: of how he had been

in love with every woman in and around Kennedy Square, from Miss Clendenning down to the latest débutante, and of how he would tell you, over his first toddy, that he had sown his wild oats and was about to settle down for life; and over his last, the sixth or seventh or eighth, that the most adorable woman in town, after a life devoted to her service, had thrown him over, and that henceforth all that was left to him was a load of buckshot and six feet of earth.

Oliver bowed to those of the members he knew, and wheeling one of the clumsy mahogany chairs into position, sat down to await the arrival of Colonel Clayton.

Meanwhile his eyes wandered over the desolate room, with its leather-covered chairs and sofas, and big marble mantel bare of every ornament but another moon-faced clock, a duplicate of the one at the bank, and two bronze candelabra flanking each end; and then on the portraits of the dead and gone members which relieved the sombre walls,—one in a plum-colored coat, with hair tied in a queue, being no other than his own ancestor. He wondered to himself where lay the charm and power to attract in a place so colorless; and he thought, as was his habit with all interiors, how different he

would want it to be if he ever became a member. His fresh young nature revolted at the dinginess and bareness of the surroundings. He could n't understand why the men came here, and what could be the fascination of sitting round these cold tables talking by the hour, when there was so much happiness outside, so much of light and air and sunshine free to everybody.

He was, moreover, a little constrained and uncomfortable. There was none of the welcome of Mr. Crocker's studio about this place, nor any of the comforting companionship of the jolly old cashier, who made the minutes fly as if they had wings, and that, too, in a musty bank far more uninviting even than the club. He remembered his mother's message now, and he remembered her face and the anxious expression, as we always remember duties when we are uncomfortable. He meant to hurry home to her as soon as the colonel dismissed him, and tell her how it had all happened, and how sorry he was, and what a stupid he had been; and she would forgive him, as she had a hundred times before.

As he sat absorbed in these thoughts, his attention was attracted by a conversation at the adjoining table between that dare-devil cross-

country rider, Tom Gunning of Calvert County, old General McTavish of the Mexican War, and Billy Talbot the exquisite. Gunning was in his corduroys and hunting-boots. He always wore them when he came to town, even when dining with his friends. He had them on now, the boots being specially in evidence, one being hooked over the chair on which he sat, and within a foot of Oliver's elbow. None of these peculiarities, however, made the slightest difference in Kennedy Square, so far as Gunning's social position was concerned, — Tom's mother having been a Carroll and his grandfather once governor of the State.

The distinguished cross-country rider was telling General McTavish — immaculate in black wig, blue coat, pepper and salt trousers, and patent leather shoes — and red-faced Billy Talbot of an adventure that he, Gunning, had had the night before while driving home to his plantation. The exquisite's costume was in marked contrast to those of the other two; it was his second change that day. At this precise moment he was upholstered in peg-top, checkerboard trousers, bob-tail Piccadilly coat, and a one-inch brim straw hat, all of the latest English pattern. Everything, in fact, that Billy possessed was English, from a rimless monocle

decorating his left eye, down to the animated door-mat of a Skye terrier that followed at his heels.

Oliver saw from the way in which McTavish leaned over the table, protecting the tray with his two arms, that he was in command of the decanter, and that the duty of alleviating the thirst of his companions had devolved upon the general. Billy Talbot sat with his hat tipped back on his head, his chin resting on his abbreviated cane, his eyes fixed on Gunning. Both McTavish and Talbot were listening intently to the cross-country rider's story.

"And you say you were sober, Gunning?" Oliver heard the general ask, with a scrutinizing look at Tom. Not with any humorous intent — more with the manner of a presiding officer at a court-martial, determined to establish certain essential facts.

"As a clock, general. The first thing I knew the mare shied and I came pretty near landin' in the dirt. (The lower county men always dropped their g's.) He was lyin', I tell you, right across the road. If it had n't been for Kitty, I would have run him down. I got out and held on to the reins, and there he was, sir, stretched out as drunk as a lord, flat on his back and sound asleep. I saw right away that

he was a gentleman, and I tied the mare to a tree, picked him up with the greatest care, laid him on the side of the road, put his hat under his head, and made him as comfortable as I could, when, by George, sir! I had n't any more than got back to my buggy, when bang! went a ball within a foot of my head!"

The general, who as he listened had been repointing the waxed ends of his dyed mustache with his lemon-colored kid gloves, now leaned back in his chair.

"Fired at you, sir?" The general had served both at Chapultepec and Buena Vista, and was an authority where gunpowder was concerned.

"That's just what he did. Came near takin' the top of my head off! Had n't been so dark he would have done it."

"Good God! you don't tell me so!" exclaimed the general, mopping his lips with his perfumed handkerchief. "Were you armed, Gunning?"

"No, sir, I was entirely at his mercy and absolutely defenceless. Well, I grabbed the reins to quiet the mare, and then I hollered out, 'What the devil do you mean, sir, by tryin' to blow the top of my head off?' I could see now that he had raised himself up on his elbow and was lookin' at me in a way I did not like.

- "" What do you mean by disturbin' my rest, sir? he called back.
- "' Well, but, my dear sir, you were lyin' in the middle of the road and might have been run over.'
- "'It's none of your business where I lie,' he hollered back. 'I go to sleep where I damn please, sir. I consider it a very great liberty.'
- "'I beg your pardon, sir,' I said. 'I did not intend any trespass.' I was walkin' toward him now. I did not want him to shoot again.
- "'That's sufficient, sir,' he said. "No gentleman can do more. There's my hand, sir. Allow me, sir, to offer you a drink. If you will roll me over, you will find my flask in my coattail pocket.'
- "Well, I rolled him over, took a drink, and then I brought the mare alongside, helped him in, and drove him home to my house. He was a most delightful gentleman. Didn't leave my place until four o'clock in the mornin'. He lives about fifteen miles below me. He told me his name was Toffington. Do you happen to know him, Talbot?" said Gunning, turning to Billy.
- "Toffington, Toffington?" said Billy, dropping his eyeglass with a movement of his eyebrows. He had listened to the story without the slightest comment. "No, Tom, unless he

is one of those upper county men. There was a fellow I met in London last year "— Billy pronounced it "larst yarh," to Oliver's infinite amusement— "with some such name as that. He and I went over to Kew Gardens with the Duke of "—

Gunning instantly turned around with an impatient gesture, — nobody ever listened to one of Billy's London stories, they being the neverending jokes around Kennedy Square, — faced the general again, much to Oliver's regret, who would have loved above all things to hear Billy descant on his English experiences.

"Do you, general, know anybody named Toffington?" asked Tom.

"No, Gunning, but here comes Clayton. He knows everybody in the State that is worth knowing. What you have told me is most extraordinary — most extraordinary, Gunning. It only goes to show how necessary it is for every man to be prepared for emergencies of this kind. You should never go unarmed, sir. You had a very narrow escape, — a very narrow escape, Gunning. Here, Clayton, come over here."

Oliver pulled his face into long lines. The picture of Gunning taking a drink with a man who a moment before had tried to blow the top of his head off, and the serious way in which

the coterie about the table regarded the incident, so excited the boy's risibles that he would have laughed outright had not his eye rested on the colonel walking toward him.

The colonel, evidently, did not hear McTavish's call. His mind was occupied with something much more important. He had been finishing a game of whist upstairs, and the mahogany-colored Cerberus had not dared to disturb him until the hand was played out. The fact that young Oliver Horn had called to see him at such an hour and in such a place had greatly disturbed him. He felt sure that something out of the ordinary had happened.

"My dear boy," he cried, as Oliver rose to meet him, "I have this instant heard you were here, or I never should have kept you waiting a moment. Nothing serious—nothing at home?"

"Oh, no, colonel. Only a word from mother, sir. I missed you at the bank, and Mr. Stiger thought that I might better come here," and he delivered his mother's message in a low voice and resumed his seat again.

The colonel, now that his mind was at rest, dropped into a chair, stroked his goatee with his thumb and forefinger, and ran over in his mind the sum of his engagements.

"Tell your dear mother," he said, "that I will do myself the honor of calling upon her on my way home late this afternoon. Nothing will give me greater pleasure. Now stay awhile with me and let me order something for you, my boy," and he beckoned to one of the brown-coated servants who had entered the room with a fresh tray for the Gunning table.

"No, thank you, colonel; I ought not to stop," Oliver replied in an apologetic way, as he rose from his seat. "I really ought to go back and tell mother;" and with a grasp of Clayton's hand and a bow to one or two men in the room who were watching his movements,—the colonel following him to the outer door,—Oliver took himself off, as was the duty of one so young and so entirely out of place among a collection of men all so knowing and distinguished.

VI

AMOS COBB'S ADVICE

IN full justice to the Chesapeake Club the scribe must admit that such light weights as Billy Talbot, Tom Gunning, and Carter Thom did not fairly represent the standing of the organization. Many of the most cultivated and enlightened men about Kennedy Square and the neighboring country enjoyed its privileges; among them not only such men as Richard Horn, Nathan Gill, the chief justice of the State, and those members of the State legislature whose birth was above reproach, but most of the sporting gentry of the county, as well as many of the more wealthy planters who lived on the Bay and whose houses were opened to their fellow members when the ducks were flying.

Each man's lineage, occupation, and opinions on the leading topics of the time were as well known to the club as to the man himself. Any newcomer presenting himself for membership was always subjected to the severest scrutiny,

and had to be favorably passed upon by a large majority of the committee before a sufficient number of votes could be secured for his election.

The only outsider elected for years had been Amos Cobb, of Vermont, the Abolitionist as he was generally called, who invariably wore black broadcloth, and whose clean-shaven face - a marked contrast to the others, with its restless black eyes, strong nose, and firm mouth — was as sharp and hard as the rocks of his native State. His election to full membership of the Chesapeake Club was not due to his wealth and commercial standing, —neither of these would have availed him, —but to the fact that he had married a daughter of Judge Wharton of Wharton Hall, and had thus, by reason of his alliance with one of the first families of the State, been admitted to all the social privileges of Kennedy Square. This exception in his favor, however, had never crippled Cobb's independence nor stifled his fearlessness in expressing his views on any one of the leading topics of the day. The Vermonter had worked with his hands when a boy on his father's farm, and believed in the dignity of labor and the blessings of self-support. He believed, too, in the freedom of all men, black and white, and looked upon slavery as a crime. He

expressed these sentiments openly and unreservedly, and declared that no matter how long he might live South he would never cease to raise his voice against a system which allowed a man, as he put it, "to sit down in the shade and fan himself to sleep while a lot of niggers whose bodies he owned were sweating in a cornfield to help feed and clothe him."

These sentiments, it must be said, did not add to his popularity, although the time had not yet arrived when he would have been thrown into the street for uttering them.

Nathan Gill was a daily visitor. He was just mounting the club steps, his long penwiper cloak about his shoulders, as Oliver, after his interview with Colonel Clayton, passed down the street on his way back to his mother. Nathan shook hands with the colonel, and the two entered the main room, and seated themselves at one of the tables.

Billy Talbot, who had moved to the window, and who had been watching Oliver until he disappeared around the corner, dropped his eyeglass with that peculiar twitch of the upper lip which no one could have imitated, and crossed the room to where Nathan and Colonel Clayton had taken their seats. Waggles, the scrap of a Skye terrier, who was never three feet from

Billy's heels, instantly crossed with him. After Billy had anchored himself and had assumed his customary position, with his feet slightly apart, Waggles, as was his habit, slid in and sat down on his haunches between his master's gaiters. There he lifted his fluffy head and gazed about him. The skill with which Mr. Talbot managed his dog was only equalled by the dexterity with which he managed his eyeglass; he never inadvertently stepped on the one nor unconsciously let slip the other. This caused Mr. Talbot considerable mental strain, but as it was all to which he ever subjected himself, he stood the test bravely.

"Who is that young man, colonel?" Billy began, as he bent his head to be sure that Waggles was in position. He had been abroad while Oliver was growing up, and so did not recognize him.

"That's Richard Horn's son," the colonel said, without raising his eyes from the paper. The colonel never took Billy seriously.

"And a fine young fellow he is," broke in Nathan, straightening himself proudly.

"Hope he don't take after his father, Gill. By the way, what's that old wisionary doing now?" drawled Billy, throwing back the lapels of his coat, and slapping his checked trousers

with his cane. "Larst time you talked to me about him he had some machine with w'eels and horseshoe magnets, did n't he? He has n't been in here for some time, so I know he's at work on some tomfoolery or other. Amazing, is n't it, that a man of his blood, with a cellar of the best madeiwa in the State, should waste his time on such things! Egad! I cawn't understand it." Some of Billy's expressions, as well as his accent, came in with his clothes. "Now, if I had that madeiwa, do you know what I'd do with it? I'd"—

"Perfectly, Billy," cried a man at the next table, who was bending over a game of chess. "You 'd drink it up in a week." Talbot had never been known by any other name than Billy, and never would be as long as he lived.

When the laugh had subsided, Nathan, whose cheeks were still burning at the slighting way in which Billy Talbot had spoken of Richard, and who had sat hunched up in his chair combing the white hair farther over his ears with his long, spare fingers, a habit with him when he was in deep thought, lifted his head and remarked quietly, addressing the room rather than Talbot, —

"Richard's mind is not on his cellar; he's got something to think of besides madeira and

cards and dogs," and he looked toward Waggles. "You will all, one day, be proud to say that he lived in our town. Richard is a genius, one of the most remarkable men of the day, and everybody outside of this place knows it; you will be compelled to admit it yet. I left him only half an hour ago, and he is just perfecting a motor, gentlemen, which will"—

"Does it go yet, Nathan?" interrupted Cobb, who was filling a glass from a decanter which a brown-coated darky had brought him. Cobb's wife was Nathan's cousin, and therefore he had a right to be familiar. "I went to see his machine the other day, but I could n't make anything out of it. Horn is a little touched here, is n't he?" and he tapped his forehead and smiled knowingly.

"No, Amos, the motor was not running when I left the shop," answered Nathan dryly and with some dignity, "but it will be, he assured me, perhaps by to-morrow." He could fight Billy Talbot, but he never crossed swords with Cobb, never in late years. Cobb was the one man in all the world, he once told Richard, with whom he had nothing in common.

"Oh, to-morrow?" and Cobb whistled as he put down the decanter and picked up the day's paper. It was one of Cobb's jokes—this

"to-morrow" of his neighbors. "What was a Northern man's to-day was always a Southern man's to-morrow," he would say. "I hope this young man of whom you speak so highly is not walking in the footsteps of this genius of a father? He looks to me like a young fellow that had some stuff in him if anybody would bring it out."

The half-concealed sneer in Cobb's voice grated also on old Judge Bowman, who threw down his book and looked up over his bowed spectacles. He was a testy old fellow, with a Burgundy face and shaggy white hair, a chin and nose that met together like a parrot's, and an eye like a hawk. It was one of his principles to permit none of his intimates to speak ill of his friends in his hearing. Criticisms, therefore, by an outsider like Cobb were especially obnoxious to him.

"Richard Horn's head is all right, Mr. Cobb, and so is his heart," he exclaimed in an indignant tone. "As for his genius, sir, Gill is within the mark. He is one of the remarkable men of our day. You are quite right, too, about his young son, who has just left here. He has all the qualities that go to make a gentleman, and many of those which will make a jurist. He is now studying law with my associate, Judge

Ellicott—a profession ennobled by his ancestors, sir, and one for which what you call his 'stuff,' but which we, sir, call his 'blood,' especially fits him. You Northern men, I know, don't believe in blood. We do down here. This young man comes of a line of ancestors that have reflected great credit on our State for more than a hundred years, and he is bound to make his mark. His grandfather on his mother's side was our chief justice in 1810, and his great-grandfather was'—

"That's just what's the matter with most of you Southerners, Judge," interrupted Cobb, his black eyes snapping. "You think more of blood than you do of brains. We rate a man on Northern soil by what he does himself, not what a bundle of bones in some family burying-ground did for him before he was born. Don't you agree with me, Clayton?"

"I can't say I do, Cobb," replied the colonel slowly, stirring his toddy. "I never set foot on your soil but once, and so am unfamiliar with your ways." He never liked Cobb. "He's so cursedly practical, and so proud of it, too," he would often say; "and if you will pardon me, sir, a trifle underbred."

"When was that?" asked Cobb, looking over the top of his paper.

"That was some years ago, when I chased a wounded canvas-back across the Susquehanna River, and had to go ashore to get him; and I want to tell you, sir, that what you call 'your soil' was damned disagreeable muck. I had to change my boots when I got back to my home, and I've never worn them since." And the colonel crushed the sugar in his glass with his spoon as savagely as if each lump were the head of an enemy, and raised the mixture to his mouth.

Amos's thin lips curled. The high and lofty airs of these patricians always exasperated him. The shout of laughter that followed the colonel's

reply brought the color to his cheeks.

"Chased him like a runaway nigger, I suppose, Clayton, did n't you? and wrung his neck when you got him," retorted Amos, biting

his lips.

"Of course, like I would any other piece of my property that tried to get away, or as I would wring the neck of any man who would help him" — And the colonel looked meaningly at the Vermonter and drained his glass with a gulp. Then smothering his anger, he moved away to the window, where he watched Mr. Talbot, who had just left the club and who at the moment was standing on the corner making his daily afternoon inspection of the two

connecting streets; an occupation which Billy varied by saluting each newcomer with a slap of his cane on his checker-board trousers and a stentorian "Bah Jove!"—Waggles meanwhile squatting pensively between his gaiters.

When an hour later the colonel presented himself at the Horn mansion, no trace of this encounter with Cobb was in his face nor in his manner. Men did not air their grievances in their own nor any one's else home around Kennedy Square.

Mrs. Horn met him with her hand extended. She had been watching for Oliver's return with a degree of impatience rarely seen in her. She had hoped that the colonel would have called upon her before he went to his office, and could not understand his delay until Oliver had given his account of the morning mishaps. She was too anxious now to chide him. It was but another indication of his temperament, she thought, a fault to be corrected with the others that threatened his success in life.

Holding fast to the colonel's hand, she drew him to one of the old haircloth sofas, and told him the whole story.

"Do not give the mortgage a thought, my dear Sallie," the colonel said in his kindest manner, when she had finished speaking, lay-

ing his hand on her wrist. "My only regret is that it should have caused you a moment's uneasiness. I know that our bank has lately been in need of a large sum of money, and this loan, no doubt, was called in by the board. But it will be all right. If not I will provide for it myself."

"No, I do not want that, and Richard, if he knew, would not be willing either. Tell me, please, how this money is loaned," and she turned and looked earnestly into his face. "What papers are passed, and who signs them? I have never had anything to do with such matters, and you must explain it all clearly."

"A note signed by Richard and made payable on a certain date was given to the bank, and the mortgage was deposited as security."

"And if the note is not paid?"

"Then the property covered by the mortgage is sold, and the bank deducts its loan. Any balance, of course, is paid over to Richard."

"And when the sale is put off, what is done then?"

"A new note is given," and here the colonel stopped as if in doubt, "and sometimes a second name is placed on the note increasing the security. But, Sallie dear, do not let this

part of it ever again cross your mind. I will attend to it should it become necessary. It is not often," and the colonel waved his hand gallantly, "that a Clayton can do a Horn a service."

"Thank you, dear friend, and it is just like you to wish to do it, but this I cannot agree to. I have thought of another way since you have been talking to me. Would it," and she stopped and looked down on the floor, "would it be of any use if I signed a note myself? This house we live in is my own, as you know, and would be an additional security to the bank if anything should happen."

The offer was so unusual that the colonel caught his breath. He looked at her in astonishment, but her eyes never wavered. He felt instantly that, however lightly he might view the subject, the matter was intensely serious with her. The colonel half rose to his feet, and with a bow that in Kennedy Square had earned for him the title of "the Chesterfield of his time, sir," placed his hand on his heart.

"My dear Sallie," he said, "not a member of the board could refuse. It would at once remove any obstacle the directors might have."

"Thank you. Then we will leave it so, and I will have the papers prepared at once."

"And is this Richard's advice?" the colonel ventured to ask, slowly regaining his seat. There were some misgivings still lingering in his Chesterfieldian mind as to whether the proudest man he knew, gentle as he was, would not forbid the whole transaction.

"No. He does not know of my purpose, and you will please not tell him. He only knows that I am opposed to allowing the property to be sold, and he has promised me that he will take no steps in the matter without my consent. All I want you to do now is to tell him that the bank has decided to let the matter stand. This obligation hereafter will be between me and the board, and I will pledge myself to carry it out. And now, one thing more before you go; and I ask this because you have seen him grow up and I know you love him. What shall I do with Oliver?"

The colonel again caught his breath. Gallant gentleman of the old school as he was, with a profound respect for the other sex, the question startled him. According to his experience and traditions, the fathers generally looked after the welfare of the sons and found them places in life, not the mothers.

"What do you want to do with him?" he

"I want him to go to work. I am afraid this life here will ruin him."

"Why, I thought he was studying law with Ellicott." The announcement could not have been very surprising to the colonel. He doubtless knew how much time Oliver spent at Judge Ellicott's office.

"He no doubt *thinks* he's studying, dear friend, but he really spends half his time in old Mr. Crocker's studio, who puts the worst possible notions into his head, and the balance of his time he is with your Sue," and she smiled faintly.

"For which you can hardly blame him, dear lady," and the colonel bent his head graciously.

"No, for she is as sweet as she can be, and you know I love her dearly; but they are both children, and will be for some years. You don't want to support them, do you? and you know Richard can't," and there flashed out from her eyes one of those quizzical glances which the colonel remembered so well in her girlhood.

The colonel nodded his head, but he did not commit himself. He had never for a moment imagined that Oliver's love affair would go as far as that, and, then again, he knew Sue.

"What do you suggest doing with him? I

will help, of course, in any way I can," he said, after a pause, during which Mrs. Horn sat watching every expression that crossed his face.

"I don't know. I have not fully made up my mind. I have been greatly disturbed over Oliver. He seems to be passing through one of those dangerous crises which often come to a boy. What do you think of my sending him to New York?"

"The North, Sallie! Why, you would n't send Oliver up North, would you?"

The announcement this time gave the colonel so genuine a shock that it sent the blood tingling to his cheeks. Really, the idiosyncrasies of the Horn family were beyond his comprehension! Evidently Richard's vagaries had permeated his household.

"I do not like the influence of the North on our young men, my dear madam." The colonel spoke now with great seriousness and with some formality, and without any of the Chesterfieldian accompaniments of tone or gesture. "If he were my boy, I should keep him here. He is young and light-hearted, I know, and loves pleasure, but that will all come out of him. Let him stay with Ellicott; he will bring him out all right. There is a brusqueness and a want of refinement among most Northern men

that have always grated on me. You can see it any day in Amos Cobb."

As he spoke a slight flush overspread his listener's face. The positiveness of his tone, she thought, carried with it a certain uncomplimentary criticism of her suggestion. The colonel saw it, and, as if in apology and to prove his case, added in a gentler tone, "Only this afternoon at the club, I heard Cobb speaking in the most outrageous manner about our most treasured institutions. It is not his fault, perhaps. It is the fault of his breeding, but it is unbearable all the same. Keep Oliver here. He has a most engaging and lovable nature, is as clean and sweet as a girl, and I have n't a doubt but what he will honor both you and his blood. Take my word for it, and keep him at home. He is young yet, barely twenty-two. There is plenty of time for him." And the colonel rose from the sofa, lifted Mrs. Horn's fingers to his lips, and bowed himself out.

The colonel only told the truth, as he saw it. In his day and generation men of twenty-two were but boys, and only gray-beards ruled the State and counting-house. The senators were indeed grave and reverend seigniors, and the merchants, in their old-fashioned dress coats, looked more like distinguished diplomats than

buyers and sellers of produce. In those days, too, the young man with a mustache was thought presuming and dangerous, and the bank who would have selected a cashier under forty, would have caused a run on its funds in a week after the youth had been appointed to his position.

After the colonel's departure, Mrs. Horn sat in deep thought. The critical tones of his voice still lingered in her memory. But her judgment had not been shaken nor was her mind satisfied. Oliver still troubled her. The colonel's advice might be right, but she dared not rely

upon it.

The next day she sent for Amos Cobb. Malachi took the message this time, not Oliver. Cobb came on the minute. He was greatly surprised at Mrs. Horn's note, for although his wife was an intimate friend of Mrs. Horn's, and he himself would have been welcome, he was seldom present at any of the functions of the house, and could not be considered one of its intimate guests. He did not like music, he said to his wife, when urged to go, and as he did not play chess or drink madeira, he preferred to stay at home.

Malachi relieved Amos of his hat, and conducted him into Mrs. Horn's presence with

rather a formal bow, quite different from the low salaam with which he had greeted Colonel Clayton. "Dat bobobalish-nest, Mister Cobb, jes gone in de parlor," he said to Aunt Hannah when he regained the kitchen. "Looks like he lived on parsimmons, he dat sour."

Mrs. Horn received her visitor cordially, but with a reserve which she had not maintained toward the colonel, for Cobb had never represented to her anything but a money standard pure and simple. It was only when the colonel had mentioned his name, and then only because of her urgent need of just such sound practical advice as she knew he could give, that she had determined to seek his services, quite as she would have consulted an architect or an attorney.

The Vermonter took his seat on the extreme edge of the sofa, squared his shoulders, pulled up the points of his high collar, touched together the tips of all his fingers, and looked straight at his hostess.

"I am greatly obliged to you for coming," she began, "for I know how busy you are, but I have a question to ask of you, which I feel sure you can answer better than any one I know. It is about my son Oliver. I am going to be perfectly frank with you, and I want you to be

equally frank with me." And she summed up Oliver's aims, temptations, and failings with a skill that gained the Vermonter's closest attention. "With all this," she continued, "he is affectionate, loves me dearly, and has never disobeyed me in his life. It is his love of change that worries me, his instability, — one thing one moment, and another the next. It seems to me the only way to break this up is to throw him completely on his own resources, so that he may realize for once what life really means. Now tell me," and she looked searchingly into Cobb's face, as if eager to note the effect of her question, "if he were your only son, would you, in view of all I have told you, send him to New York to make his start in life, or would you keep him here?"

The Vermonter's face had begun to lighten as she progressed, and had entirely cleared when he learned why he had been sent for. He had been afraid, when he received her note, that it had been about the mortgage. Cobb was chairman of the Loan Committee at the bank, had personally called attention to Richard's note being overdue, and had himself ordered its payment.

"My two boys are at school in Vermont, madam," he answered slowly.

"But Oliver must earn his own living," she said earnestly. "His father will have nothing to give him."

Most all of these aristocratic Southerners were on their last legs. He was right about the note, he said to himself; it was just as well to have it paid; and he made a mental memorandum to inquire about it as soon as he reached his office, and have it pressed for settlement at once. Business matters must be kept intact.

"What do you want him to do, madam?" he asked, looking at her keenly from under his bushy eyebrows.

"Anything to earn his bread," she replied in a decided tone.

Cobb passed his hand over his face, pinched his chin with his thumb and forefinger, and looked out of the window. The answer pleased him. It pleased him, too, to be consulted by the Horns on a matter of this kind. It pleased him most of all to realize that when these aristocrats who differed with him politically got into a financial hole, they had to send for him to help pull them out.

For a moment the Vermonter remained in deep thought. "Here is a Southern woman," he said to himself, "with some common sense

and with a head on her shoulders. If her husband had half her brains I'd let the mortgage stand." Then he turned and faced her squarely, his eyes boring into hers.

"Send him to New York, by all means, madam, or anywhere else out of here," he said firmly, but with a kindly tone in his voice. "When you decide, let me know. I will give him a letter to a business friend of mine who lives on the Hudson a short distance above the city, who may help him. But let me advise you to send him at once. I saw your son yesterday at the club, and he exactly fits your measure, except in one respect. He's got more grit in him than you give him credit for. I looked him over pretty carefully, and if he gets in a tight place you need n't worry about him. He'll pull out, or my name is n't Cobb. And now one thing more," and he rose stiffly from the sofa and buttoned up his coat, "don't give him any pocket-money. Chuck him out neck and heels into the world, and let him shift for himself. That's the way I was treated, and that 's the way I got on. Good-day."

VII

A SEAT IN UNION SQUARE

WITHIN a day's journey of Kennedy Square lay another wide breathing space, its winding paths worn smooth by countless hurrying feet.

Over its flat monotony straggled a line of gnarled willows, marking the wanderings of some guileless brook long since swallowed up and lost in the mazes of the great city, like many another young life fresh from green fields and sunny hillsides. This desert of weeds and sundried, yellow grass, this kraal for scraggly trees and broken benches, breasted the rush of the great city as a stone breasts a stream, dividing its current, — one part swirling around and up Broadway to the hills and the other flowing eastward toward Harlem and the Sound. Around its four sides, fronting the four streets that hemmed it in, ran a massive iron railing, socketed in stone and made man-proof and dog-proof by four great iron gates. These gates were opened at dawn to let the restless in, and closed at night to keep the weary out.

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Above these barriers of stone and iron no joyous magnolias lifted their creamy blossoms; no shy climbing roses played hide-and-seek, blushing scarlet when caught. Along its foot-worn paths no drowsy Moses ceased his droning call; no lovers walked forgetful of the world; no staid old gentlemen wandered idly, their noses in their books.

All day long on its rude straight-backed benches and over its threadbare turf sprawled unkempt women with sick babies from the shanties; squalid, noisy children from the rookeries; beggars in rags, and now and then some hopeless wayfarer, who for the moment had given up his search for work or bread, and who rested or slept until the tap of a constable's club brought him to consciousness and his feet.

At night before the gates were closed—ten o'clock was the hour—there could always be found, under its dim lamps, some tired girl sitting in the light for better protection while she rested, or some weary laborer on the way home from his long day's work; and always passing to and fro, swinging his staff, bullying the streetrats who were playing tag among the trees, and inspiring a wholesome awe among those hiding in the shadows, lounged some guardian of the peace, awaiting the hour when he could drive

the inmates to the sidewalk, and shut the gates behind them with a bang.

Here on one of these same straight-backed wooden seats one September night — a night when the air was heavy with a blurred haze, through which the lamps peered as in a fog, and the dust lay thick upon the leaves — sat our Oliver.

Outside the square, all about the iron fence, and surging past the big equestrian statue, could be heard the roar and din of the great city, that maelstrom which now seemed ready to engulf him. No sound of merry laughter reached him, only rumbling of countless wheels, the slow thud of never-ending crowded stages lumbering over the cobbles, the cries of the hucksters selling hot corn, and the ceaseless scrapings of a thousand feet.

He had sat here since the sun had gone down, watching the crowds, wondering how they lived, and how they had earned their freedom from such cares as were now oppressing him. His heart was heavy. A long-coveted berth, meaning self-support and independence, and consequent relief to his mother's heart, had been almost within his grasp. It was not the place he had expected when he left home. It was much more menial and unremunerative, but he



THE ROAR OF THE GREAT CITY IN HIS EARS.



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had outlived all his bright hopes. He was ready now to take anything he could get, to save him from returning to Kennedy Square, or, what would be still worse, from asking his mother for a penny more than she had given him. Rather than do this he would sweep the streets.

As he leaned forward on the bench, his face in his hands, his elbows on his knees, his thoughts went back to his father's house. He knew what they were all doing at this hour; he could see the porches crowded with the boys and girls he loved, their bright voices filling the night air, Sue in the midst of them, her curls about her face. He could see his father in the big chair, reading by the lamp, that dear old father who had held his hands so tenderly and spoken with such earnestness the day before he had left Kennedy Square.

"Your mother is right," Richard had said.
"I am glad you are going, my son; the men at the North are broader-minded than we are here, and you will soon find your place among them. Great things are ahead of us, my boy. I shall not live to see them, but you will."

He could see his mother, too, sitting by the window, looking out upon the trees. He knew where her thoughts lay. As his mind rested on her pale face his eyes filled with tears. "Dear

old mother," he said to himself, "I am not forgetting, dearie. I am holding on. But oh, if I had only got the place to-day, how happy you would be to-morrow!"

A bitter feeling had risen in his heart, when he had opened the letter which had brought him the news of the loss of this hoped-for situation. "This is making one's way in the world, is it?" he had said to himself, with a heavy sigh. Then the calm eyes of his mother had looked into his again, and he had felt the pressure of the soft hand and heard the tones of her voice.

"You may have many discouragements, my son, and will often be ready to faint by the way, but stick to it and you will win."

His bitterness had been but momentary, and he had soon pulled himself together, but his every resource seemed exhausted now,—he had counted so on the situation, that of a shipping clerk in a dry-goods store, promised him because of a letter that he carried from Amos Cobb's friend. But at the last moment the former clerk, who had been laid off because of sickness, had been taken back, and so the weary search for work must begin again.

And yet with everything against him, Oliver had no thought of giving up the struggle. Even Amos Cobb would have been proud of him could

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he have seen the dogged tenacity with which he clung to his purpose,—a tenacity due to his buoyant, happy temperament, or to his devotion to his mother's wishes, or (and this is more than probable) to some drops of blood, perhaps, that had reached his own through his mother's veins, the blood of that major with the blue and buff coat, whose portrait hung in the diningroom at home, and who in the early days had braved the flood at Trenton side by side with the Hero of the Bronze Horse now overlooking the bench on which Oliver sat; or it may be of that other ancestor in the queue whose portrait hung over the mantel of the club, and who had served his State with distinction in his day.

Whatever the causes of these several effects, the one dominating power which now controlled him was his veneration for his mother's name and honor. For on the night succeeding Amos Cobb's visit, after she had dropped upon her knees and poured out her heart in prayer, she had gone into Oliver's bedroom, and shutting the door, had told him of the mortgage; of his father's embarrassment, and the danger they suffered of losing the farm, their only hope for their old age, unless success crowned Richard's inventions. With his hand fast in hers she had

given him in exact detail all that she had done to ward off this calamity; recounting, word by word, what she had said to the colonel, lowering her voice almost to a whisper as she spoke of the solemn promise she had made him — involving her own and her husband's honor — and the lengths to which she was prepared to go to keep her obligations to the bank.

Then, her hand still clasping his, the two sitting side by side on his bed, his wondering, startled eyes looking into hers, for this world of anxiety was an unknown world to him, she had by slow stages made him realize how necessary it was that he, their only son and their sole dependence, should begin at once to earn his daily bread; not only on his own account but on hers and his father's. In her tenderness she had not told him that the real reason was his instability of purpose; fearing to wound his pride, she had put it solely on the ground of his settling down to some work.

"It is the law of nature, my son," she had added. "Everything that lives must work to live. You have only to watch the birds out here in the Square to convince you of that. Notice them to-morrow, when you go out. See how busy they are; see how long it takes for any one of them to get a meal. You are old

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enough now to begin to earn your own bread, and you must begin at once, Ollie. Your father can no longer help you. I had hoped your profession would do this for you, but that is not to be thought of now."

Oliver at first had been stunned by it all. He had never before given the practical side of life a single thought. Everything had gone along smoothly from his earliest remembrance. His father's house had been his home and his protection; his room, with its little bed and pretty hangings and all its comforts, — a room cared for like a girl's, — had always been open to him. He had never once asked himself how these things came about, nor why they continued. These revelations of his mother's, therefore, were like the sudden opening of a door covering a vault over which he had walked unconsciously and which now, for the first time, he saw yawning beneath him.

"Poor daddy!" were his first words. "I never knew a thing about his troubles; he seems always so happy and so gentle! I am so sorry — dear daddy — dear dad," he kept re-

peating.

And then as she spoke there flashed into his mind the thought of his own hopes. They were shattered now. He knew that the art career

was dead for him, and that all his dreams in that direction were over.

He was about to tell her this, but he stopped before the words were formed. He would not add his own burden to her sorrow. No, he would bear it alone. He would tell Sue, but he would not tell his mother. Next there welled up in his heart a desire to help this mother whom he idolized, and this father who represented to him all that was kind and true.

"What can I do? Where can I go, dearie?" he cried with sudden resolve. "Even if I am to work with my hands I am ready to do it, but it must be away from here. I could not do it here at home with everybody looking on. No, not here!"

This victory gained, the mother with infinite tact, little by little, unfolded to the son the things she had planned. Finally with her arms about his neck, smoothing his cheek with her hands, she told him of Amos Cobb's advice and of his offer, adding, "He will give you a letter to his friend who lives at Haverstraw, near New York, my boy, with whom you can stay until you get the situation you want."

The very impracticability of this scheme did not weigh with her. She did not see how almost hopeless would be the task of finding

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employment in an unknown city. Nor did the length of time her son might be a burden on a total stranger make any difference in her plans. Her own home had always been open to the friends of her friends, and for any length of time, and her inborn sense of hospitality made it impossible for her to understand any other conditions. Then again she said to herself, "Mr. Cobb is a thoroughly practical man, and a very kind one. His friend will welcome Oliver, or he would not have allowed my son to go." She had repeated, however, no word of the Vermonter's advice "to chuck the boy out neck and heels into the world and let him shift for himself," although the very Spartan quality of the suggestion, in spite of its brusqueness, had greatly pleased her. She could not but recognize that Amos understood. She would have faced the situation herself if she had been in her son's place; she said so to herself. And she hoped, too, that Oliver would face it as bravely when the time came.

As for the temptations that might assail her boy in the great city, she never gave them a thought. Neither the love of drink nor the love of play ran in her own or Richard's veins, not for generations back. "One test of a gentleman, my son," Richard always said, "lies in

the way in which he controls his appetites, in the way he regards his meat and drink. Both are foods for the mind as well as for the body, and must be used as such. Gluttons and drunkards should be classed together.' No, her boy's heart might lead him astray, but not his appetites, and never his passions. She was as sure of that as she was of his love.

As she talked on, Oliver's mind, yielding to her stronger will as clay does to a sculptor's hand. began to take shape. What at first had looked like a hardship now began to have an attractive side. Perhaps the art career need not be wholly given up. Perhaps, too, there was a better field for him in New York than here - old Mr. Crocker had always told him this. Then, too, there was something of fascination, after all, in going out alone like a knight errant to conquer the world. And in that great Northern city, too, with its rush and whirl and all that it held for him of mystery! How many times had Mr. Crocker talked to him by the hour of its delights! And Ellicott's chair! Yes, he could get rid of that. And Sue? Sue would wait; she had promised him she would. No, there was no doubt about Sue! She would love him all the better if he fought his battle alone. Only the day before she had told him of the won-

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derful feats of the White Knight, that the new English poet had just written about and that everybody in Kennedy Square was now reading.

Above all there was the delight of another sensation, the sensation of a new move. This really pleased him best. He was apparently listening to his mother when these thoughts took possession of him, for his eyes were still fixed on hers, but he heard only a word now and then. It was his imagination that swayed him now, not his will nor his judgment. He would have his own adventures in the great city and see the world as Mr. Crocker had done, he said to himself.

"Yes, dearie, I'll go," he answered quickly. "Don't talk any more about it. I'll do just as you want me to, and I'll go anywhere you say. But about the money for my expenses - can father give it to me?" he asked suddenly, a shade of anxiety crossing his face.

"We won't ask your father, Ollie," she said, drawing him closer to her. She knew he would yield to her wishes, and she loved him the better for it, if that were possible. "I have a little money saved which I will give you. You won't be long finding a good place."

"And how often can I come back to you?"

he cried, starting up. Until now this phase of the situation had not entered his mind.

"Not often, my boy, certainly not until you can afford it. It is costly travelling. Maybe once or twice a year."

"Oh, then there's no use talking. I can't go. I can't, can't, be away from you that long. That's going to be the hardest part." He had started from his seat and stood over her, a look of determination on his face.

"Oh, yes, you can, my son, and you will," she replied, as she, too, rose and stood beside him, stopping the outburst of his weakness with her calm voice, and quieting and soothing him with the soft touch of her hand, caressing his cheek with her fingers as she had so often done when he, a baby, had lain upon her breast.

Then with a smile on her face she had kissed him good-night, closed the door, and staggering along the corridor, steadying herself as she walked, her hand on the walls, had thrown herself upon her bed in an agony of tears, crying out,—

"Oh, my boy, my boy! How can I give you up? And I know it is forever!"

And now here he is, foot-sore and heart-sore, sitting in Union Square, New York, the roar of the great city in his ears; and here he must sit

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until the cattle barge which takes him every night to the house of Amos Cobb's friend is ready to start on her voyage up the river.

He sat with his head in his hands, his elbows on his knees, not stirring until a jar on the other end of the bench roused him. A negro hod-carrier, splashed with plaster, and wearing a ragged shirt and a crownless straw hat, had taken a seat beside him. The familiarity of the act startled Oliver. No negro wayfarer would have dared so much in his own Square at home.

The man reached forward and drew closer to his own end of the bench a bundle of sawed ends and bits of wood which he had carried across the park on his shoulder.

Oliver watched him for a moment, with a feeling amounting almost to indignation. "Were the poverty and the struggle of a great city to force such familiarities upon him," he wondered. Then something in the negro's face, as he wiped the perspiration from his forehead with the back of his hand, produced a sudden change of feeling. "Was this man, too, without work?" Oliver asked himself, as he felt the negro's weariness, and realized for the first time the common heritage of all men.

"Are you tired, Uncle?" he asked.

"Yes, a little mite. I been a-totin' dis kindlin' from way up yander in Twenty-third Street, where the circus useter be. Dey's buildin' a big hotel dere now, de Fifth Avenue dey calls it. I'm a-carryin' mortar for de bricklayers, an' somehow dese sticks is monst'ous heavy after workin' all day."

"Where do you live?" asked Oliver, his eyes on the kindling wood.

"Not far from here, sah; little way dis side de Bow'ry. Whar's yo'r home?" And the old man rose to his feet and picked up his bundle.

The question staggered Oliver. He had no home, really none that he could call his own — not now.

"Oh, a long way from here," he answered thoughtfully, without raising his head, his voice choking.

The old negro gazed at him for a moment, touched his hat respectfully, and walked toward the gate. At the entrance he wheeled about, balanced the bundle of wood on his shoulder, and looked back at Oliver, who had resumed his old position, his eyes on the ground. Then he walked away, muttering,—

"'Pears like he's one o' my own people, calling me uncle. Spec he ain't been long from his mammy."

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Two street-rats now sneaked up toward Oliver, watched him for a moment, and whispered to each other. One threw a stone which grazed Oliver's head; the other put his hand to his mouth and yelled, "Spad! spad!" at the top of his voice. Oliver understood the epithet. It meant that he wore clean linen, polished shoes, and perhaps, now and then, a pair of gloves. He had heard the same outcry in his own city, for the slang of the street-rat is Volapük the world over. But he did not resent the assault: he was too tired to chase any boys, and too despondent to answer their taunts.

A constable, attracted by the cries of the boys, now passed in front of him, swinging his long staff. He was about to tap Oliver's knees with one end of it, as a gentle reminder that he had better move on, when something in the young man's face or appearance made him change his mind.

"Hi, sonny," he cried, turning quickly and facing Oliver, "yer can't bum round here after ten, ye know. Keep yer eyes peeled for them gates, d'ye hear?"

If Oliver heard he made no reply. He was in no mood to dispute the officer's right to order him about. The gates were not the only openings shut in his face, he thought to himself;

everything seemed closed against him in this great city. It was not so at home on Kennedy Square. Its fence was a shackly, moss-covered, sagging old fence, intertwined with honeysuckles, full of holes, and minus many a paling; where he could have found a dozen places to crawl through. He had done so only a few weeks before with Sue in a mad frolic across the Square. Besides, why should the constable speak to him at all? He knew all about the hour of closing the New York gates without the policeman reminding him of it. Had he not sat here every night waiting for that cattle-boat? He hated the place cordially, yet it was the only spot in that great city to which he could come and not be molested while he waited for the barges. He always selected this particular bench because it was nearest the gate that led to the bronze horse. He loved to look at its noble contour silhouetted against the sky or illumined by the street-lamps, and was seldom too tired to be inspired by it. He had never seen any work in sculpture to be compared to it, and for the first few days after his arrival. he was never content to end the day's tramping until he stood beneath it, following its outlines, his heart swelling with pride at the thought that one of his own nationality, and

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not a European, had created it. He wished that his father, who believed so in the talent of his countrymen, could see it.

Suddenly, while he was still resenting the familiarity of the constable, his ears were assailed by the cry of a dog in pain; some street-rat had kicked him.

Instantly Oliver was on his feet. A small spaniel was running toward him, followed by half a dozen boys who were pelting him with stones.

Oliver sprang forward as the dog crouched at his feet, caught him up in his arms, and started for the rats, who dodged behind the tree-trunks, calling, "Spad! Spad!" as they ran. Then came the voice of the same constable,—

"Hi, yer can't bring that dog in here."

"He's not my dog. Somebody has hurt him," said Oliver in an indifferent tone, examining carefully the dog's legs to see if any bones were broken.

"If that ain't your dog what yer doin' with him? See here, I been a-watchin' ye. Yer got ter move on or I'll run ye in. D' ye moind?"

Oliver's eyes flashed. In all his life no man had ever doubted his word, nor had any one eyer spoken to him in such terms.

"You can do as you please, but I will take

care of this dog, no matter what happens. You ought to be ashamed of yourself to see him hurt, and not want to protect him. You're a pretty kind of an officer."

A crowd began to gather.

Oliver was standing with the dog under one arm, holding the little fellow close to his breast, the other bent with fist tight shut, as if to defend himself.

"I am, am I? Yer moon-faced spad! I'll show ye," and he sprang toward Oliver.

"Here, now, Tim Murphy," came a sharp voice, "kape yer hands off the young gintleman. He ain't a-doin' nothin', and he ain't done nothin'. Thim divils hit the dog. I seen 'em myself."

The officer turned quickly and faced a big, broad-shouldered Irishwoman, bareheaded, her sleeves rolled up to her elbows, every line in her kindly face replete with indignation.

"Don't put yer hands on him, or I'll go to the lock-up an' tell McManus."

"Oh, it's you, is it, Mrs. Mulligan?" said the officer in a conciliatory tone.

"Yes, it's me. The young gintleman's right. It's the b'ys ye oughter club into shape, not be foolin' yer time over the dog."

"Well, ye know it's agin the rules to let

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dogs inside the gates," he retorted as he continued his stroll along the walk, swinging his club as he went, puffing out his chest and cheeks with his old air as he moved toward the gate.

"Yes, an' so it's agin the rules," she called after him, "to have them rapscallions yellin' like mad an' howlin' bloody murder when a body comes up here to git a breath o' air."

"Is the dog hurt, sir?" and she stepped close to Oliver and laid her big hand on the dog's head, as it lay nestling close to Oliver's side.

"No, I don't think so. He would have been if I had not got him."

The dog, under the caress, raised his head, and a slight movement of his tail expressed his pleasure. Then his ears shot forward. A young man about Oliver's own age was rapidly walking up the path, with a quick, springy step, whistling as he came. The dog, with a sudden movement, squirmed himself from under Oliver's arm and sprang toward him.

"Oh, it's you, Mr. Fred, is it?" broke out the woman, "and it's Miss Margaret's dog, too. Of course it's her dog, an' I was that dumb I did n't know it. But it's not me ye can thank for savin' its skin. It's the young gintleman

here. Them divils would have killed it but for him."

"Is the dog yours, sir?" asked Oliver, raising his hat with that peculiar manner of his which always won him friends at first sight.

"No, I wish it were. It's Miss Margaret Grant's dog — one of our students. I am taking care of it while she is away. The little rascal ran out and got into the Square before I knew it. I live right across the street. You can see my house from here. Miss Grant will be ever so much obliged to you for protecting him."

"Oh, don't mention it. I got hold of him just in time, or these ruffians would have hurt him. I think the old lady here, however, is most to be thanked. We might both have been locked up," he added, smiling, "if she had not interfered. You know her, it seems."

"Yes, she's Mother Mulligan, as we call her. She's janitress of the Academy of Design, where I draw at night. My name's Fred Stone. Come over to where I live—it's only a step," and he looked straight into Oliver's face, his big blue eyes never wavering.

"Well, I will if you don't think it 's too late," and the two young fellows, with a wave of their hands to the old woman, left the Square, the dog bounding before them.

A SEAT IN UNION SQUARE

Within the hour — in less time, indeed, for the friendly light in the eyes of his new-found friend had shone straight into our boy's soul, warming and cheering him to his finger-tips, opening his heart, and bringing out all his secrets — Oliver had told Fred the story of his fruitless tramps for work; of his mother's hopes and fears; of his own ambitions and his aims. And Fred, his own heart wide open, had told Oliver with equal frankness the story of his own struggles; of his leaving his father's farm in the western part of the State, and of his giving up everything to come to New York to study art.

It was the old, old story of two chance acquaintances made friends by reason of the common ground of struggle and privation on which they stood; comrades fighting side by side in the same trenches for the same end, and both dreaming of the morrow which would always bring victory and never death — a story told without reserve, for the disappointments of life had not yet dulled their enthusiasm, nor had the caution acquired by its many bitter experiences yet checked the free flow of their confidences.

To Oliver, in his present despondent mood, the hand held out to him was more than the hand of a comrade. It was the hand of a strong

swimmer thrust into the sea to save a drowning man. There were others, then, besides himself, he thought, as he grasped it, who were making this fight for bread and glory; there was something else in the great city besides cruelty and misery, money-getting and money-spending, — something of unselfishness, sympathy, and love.

The two sat on the steps of Fred's boarding-house — that house where Oliver was to spend so many happy days of his after-life — until there was only time enough to catch the barge. Reluctantly he bade his new-found comrade good-by and, waving his hand, turned the corner in the direction of the dock.

The edge of Oliver's cloud had at last caught the light!

VIII

AN OLD SONG

OT only had the sunshine of a new friendship illumined the edge of Oliver's clouds, but before the week was out a big breeze laden with success had swept them so far out to sea, that none but the clearest of skies radiant with hope now arched above his happy face.

A pasteboard sign had wrought this miracle. One day he had been tramping the lower parts of the city, down among the docks near Coenties Slip, looking up the people who on former visits had said, "Some other time, perhaps," or "If we should have room for another man we will be glad to remember you," or "We know Mr. Cobb, and shall be pleased," etc., etc., when he chanced to espy a strange sign tacked outside a warehouse door, a sign which bore the unheard-of announcement,—unheard-of to Oliver, especially the last word,—"SHIP-PING CLERK WANTED."

No one, for weeks, had wanted anything that Oliver could furnish. Strangely enough, too, as

he afterward discovered, the bullet-headed Dutch porter had driven the last tack into the clean, white, welcome face of the sign only five minutes before Oliver stopped in front of it. Still more out of the common, and still more incomprehensible, was the reply made to him by the head salesman, whom he found just inside the door,—a wiry, restless little man with two keen black eyes and a perfectly bald head,—

"Yes, if you can mark boxes decently, can show any references, don't want too much pay, and can come *now*. We 're short of a boy, and it's our busy season."

Oh! blessed be Mr. Crocker, thought Oliver, as he picked up a marking brush, stirred it round and round in the tin pot filled with lamp-black and turpentine, and to his own and the clerk's delight, painted, on a clean board, rapidly and clearly, and in new letters, too, — new to the clerk, — the full address of the bald-headed man's employers: —

MORTON, SLADE & CO.,
121 PEARL STREET, NEW YORK

More amazing still were the announcements made by the same bald-headed man after Oliver had shown him Amos Cobb's recommendations:

Oliver was to come to work in the morning, the situation to be permanent provided Cobb confirmed by letter the good wishes he had previously expressed, and provided Mr. Morton, the senior partner, approved of the bald-head's action; of which the animated billiard-ball said there was not the slightest doubt, as he, the ball, had charge of the shipping department, and was responsible for its efficiency.

All of these astounding, incomprehensible, and amazing occurrences Oliver had written to his mother, ending his letter by declaring in his enthusiasm that it was his art, after all, which had pulled him through, and that but for his readiness with the brush, he would still be a tramp, instead of "rolling in luxury on the huge sum of eight dollars a week, with every probability of becoming a partner in the house, and later on a millionaire." To which the dear lady had replied that she was delighted to know he had pleased his employers, but that what had pleased her most was his never having lost heart while trying to win his first fight, adding, "The second victory will come more easily, my darling boy, and so will each one hereafter." Poor lady, she never knew how sore that boy's feet had been, nor how many times he had gone with half a meal or none at

all, for fear of depleting too much the small store she had given him when he left home.

With his success still upon him, he had sallied forth to call upon young Fred Stone, who had grasped his hand so warmly the night he had rescued the dog from the street-boys, and whose sympathy had gone out to him so freely. He had written him of his good fortune, and Fred had replied, begging him to call upon him, and had appointed this same Friday night as the night of all others when he could entertain him best.

But Oliver is not the same boy who said good-by to Fred that moonlight night the week before. His eyes are brighter; his face is a-glow with ill concealed pleasure. Even his step shows the old-time spring and lightness of the days at home, — on his toes part of the time, as if restraining an almost uncontrollable impulse to stop and throw one or two hand-springs, just to relieve the pressure on his nerves.

When he reached the bench in the square where he had sat so many nights with his head in his hands, one of those quick outbursts of enthusiasm took possession of him, the kind that sets young hearts singing with joy when some sudden shift of hope's kaleidoscope opens a wide horizon brilliant with the light of future

success. With an exclamation of boyish glee he plumped himself down upon the hard planks of the bench, and jumped up again, pirouetting on his toe and slanting his hat over one eye, as if in a spirit of sheer bravado against fate. Then he sauntered out of the iron gate to Fred's house.

Even as he waited on the stone steps of Miss Teetum's boarding-house for the dowdy servant girl's return, — such dirty, unkempt steps as they were, and such a dingy door-plate, spotted with rain and dust, not like Malachi's, he thought, — he could hardly restrain himself from beating Juba with his foot, a plantation trick Malachi had taught him, keeping time the while with the palms of his hands on his shapely legs.

Meanwhile another young enthusiast is coming downstairs three steps at a time, this one bareheaded, all out of breath, and without a coat, who pours out his heart to the first Jubabeating enthusiast as the two climb the stairs together to the second enthusiast's room, on the very top floor. He tells him of his delight at seeing him again, and of the lot of fellows waiting to welcome him under the skylight, and of what a jolly lot the "Skylarkers" really are, and of Mr. Slade, Oliver's employer,

whom Fred knows and who comes from Fred's own town, and of how much Mr. Slade likes a certain new clerk, one Oliver Horn, of Kennedy Square, he having said so the night before, this same Horn being the precise individual whose arm at that very moment was locked in Fred's own, and which was now getting an extra squeeze merely for the purposes of identification.

All of this Fred poured into Oliver's willing ear without stopping to take breath, as they mounted the four long flights of stairs that led to the top floor, where, under the roof, there lived a group of Bohemians as unique in their personalities as could be found the great city over.

When the two pairs of feet had at last reached the last flight of steps under the flat roof of the house, the "Skylarkers" were singing "Old Dog Tray" at the top of their voices, to the accompaniment of a piano, and of some other instruments, the character of which our young hero failed to recognize, although the strains had grown louder and louder as the young men mounted the stairs.

As Oliver stood in the open doorway and looked in through the haze of tobacco smoke upon the group, he instantly became conscious

that a new world had opened before him, — a world as he had always pictured it, full of mystery and charm, peopled by a race as fascinating to him as any Mr. Crocker had ever described, and as new and strange as if its members had been the denizens of another planet.

The interior was not a room, but a square, low-ceiled hall, into which opened some six or more small bedrooms, slept in, whenever sleep was possible, by an equal number of Miss Teetum's boarders. The construction and appointments of this open garret, with two exceptions, were similar to those of all other garrets of its class: it had walls and ceiling, once whitewashed, and now discolored by roof-leaks from a weather-beaten skylight; its floor was bare of carpet, and its well-worn woodwork was stained with time and use. Chairs, however, were scarce, most of the boarders and their guests being seated on the floor.

The two exceptions, already noted, were some crisp, telling sketches, big and little, in color and black and white, the work of the artist members of this coterie, which covered every square inch of the leak-stained surface of ceiling and wall, and the yellow-keyed, battered piano, which occupied the centre of the open space and which stood immediately under two flaring gas-

jets. At the moment of Fred's and Oliver's arrival the top of this instrument was ornamented by two musically inclined gentlemen, one seated cross-legged like a Turk, voicing the misfortunes of Dog Tray, the other, with his legs resting on a chair, beating time to the melody with a cane. This cane, at short intervals, he brought down upon the shoulders of any ambitious member who attempted to usurp his place. The chief object of the gathering, so far as Oliver's hasty glance could determine, was undoubtedly the making of as much noise as possible.

While the young men stood looking into the room waiting for the song to cease, prior to Oliver's entry and introduction, Fred whispered hurriedly into his guest's ear some of the names, occupations, and characteristics of the group before him.

The cross-legged man with the long neck, drooping mustache, and ropy black hair, was none other than Bowdoin, the artist, the only American who had taken a medal at Munich for landscape, but who was now painting portraits and starving slowly in consequence. He mounted to this eyry every Friday night, so as to be reminded of the good old days at Schwartz's. The short, big-mustached, bald-headed man swinging the cane was Bianchi, Julius Bianchi,

known to the Skylarkers as "The Pole," and to the world at large as an accomplished lithographer and maker of mezzotints. Bianchi was a piece of the early artistic driftwood cast upon our shores, an artist every inch of him, drawing from life, and handling the crayon like a master.

The pale-faced young fellow at the piano, with bulging watch-crystal eyeglasses and hair tucked behind his ears, was the well-known all-round musician, Wenby Simmons, otherwise known as "Pussy Me-ow," a name associated in some way with the strings of his violin. This virtuoso played in the orchestra at the Winter Garden, and occupied the bedroom next to Fred's.

The clean-shaven, well-groomed young Englishman standing behind Simmons and holding a coal-scuttle half full of coal, which he shook with deafening jangle to help swell the chorus, was "My Lord Cockburn," so called, an exchange clerk in a banking-house. He occupied the room opposite Fred's.

With the ending of the chorus Fred Stone stepped into the open space with his arm through that of his guest, and the noise was hushed long enough for the entire party to welcome the young Southerner, — a welcome which kindled into a

glow of enthusiasm when they caught the look of frank, undisguised pleasure which lighted his face, and noticed the unaffected bow with which he entered the room, shaking hands with each one as Fred introduced him, and all with that warm, hearty, simple, courteous manner peculiar to his people.

The slight ceremony over, — almost every Friday night some new guest was welcomed,— Fred seated himself on the floor with his back to the whitewashed wall, although two chairs were at once offered them, and made room for Oliver, who settled down beside him.

As they sat leaning back, Oliver's eyes wandering over the room, drinking in the strange, fascinating scene before him, as bewildering as it was unexpected, Fred, now that they were closer to the scene of action, again whispered or shouted, as the suddenly revived noise permitted, into Oliver's alert and delighted ears such additional facts concerning the other members present as he thought would interest his guest.

The fat man behind the piano, astride of a chair, a pipe in his mouth, and a black velvet skullcap on his head, was Tom Waller, the sheep painter, Thomas Brandon Waller, he signed it, known as the Walrus. He, too, was a boarder

and a delightful fellow, although an habitual grumbler. His highest ambition was to affix an N. A. at the end of his name, but he had failed of election by thirty votes out of forty cast. That exasperating event he had duly celebrated at Pfaff's in various continued libations covering a week, and had accordingly, on many proper and improper occasions, renewed and recelebrated the event, breathing out, meanwhile, between his pewter mugs, scathing anathemas against the "idiots" who had defeated him out of his just rights, and who were stupid enough to believe in the school of Verboeckhoeven, slick and shiny Verboeckhoeven, -- "the mechanic," he would call him with his fists closed tight, who painted the hair on every one of his sheep as if it were curled by a pair of barber's tongs, not dirty and woolly and full of suggestions as, of course, he, the great Waller, alone of all living animal painters, depicted it. All of which, to Waller's credit it must be parenthetically stated, these same "idiots" learned to recognize in after years as true, when that distinguished animal painter took a medal at the Salon for the same picture which the jury of N. A.'s had rejected at their Spring Exhibition.

The irreproachable, immaculate young person, with eyes half closed, lying back in the

armchair, one which he had brought from his own room, was "Ruffle-shirt" Tomlins. He was the only member who dressed every day for dinner, whether he was going out afterward or not, spike-tailed coat, white tie, and all. Tomlins not only knew intimately a lady of high degree who owned a box at the Academy of Music, in Fourteenth Street, and who invited him to sit in it at least once a season, but he had besides a large visiting acquaintance among the people of quality living on Irving Place. A very agreeable and kindly little man was "Ruffle-shirt" Tomlins, so Fred said, - the sort of a little man whose philosophy of life was based on the possibility of catching more innocent, unwary flies with honey than he could with vinegar, and who in consequence always said nice things about everybody, sometimes in a loud tone enough for everybody to hear. This last statement of Fred's Tomlins confirmed ten minutes later by remarking, in a stage whisper to Waller. -

"Did you see how that young Mr. Horn entered the room? Nobody like these high-bred Southerners, my boy. Quite the air of a man of the world, has n't he?" To all of which the distinguished sheep painter made no other reply than a slight nod of the head, as he blew a

cloud of smoke toward the ceiling, Tomlins's immaculate appearance being a constant offence to the untidy painter.

The member with the stentorian voice, who was roaring out his opinions to Cockburn, Fred continued, was "Fog-horn" Cranch, the auctioneer. His room was next to Waller's. His weaknesses were gay-colored waistcoats and astounding cravats. He varied these portions of his dress according to wind, weather, and sales of the day, selecting blue for sunshiny mornings, black for rainy ones, green for pictures, red for household furniture, white for real estate, etc. Into these color schemes he stuck a variety of scarf-pins, none very valuable or rare, but each one distinct, — a miniature ivory skull, for instance, with little garnets for eyes, or tiny onyx dice with sixes on all sides.

The one man of all the others most beloved by Fred and every other boarder, guest, and habitué that gathered around the piano in this garret room, and now conspicuous by his absence, — he having gone to the circus opposite the Academy of Music, and not likely to return until late, a fact greatly regretted by Fred, who made this announcement with lowered voice to Oliver, — was a young Irishman by the name of McFudd, Cornelius McFudd, the life of the

house, and whom Waller, in accordance with the general custom, had christened "Continuous McFuddle," by reason of the nature of the Hibernian's habits. His room was across the open space opposite Fred's, with windows overlooking the yard.

This condensation of good nature, wit, and good humor, Fred went on to say, had been shipped to "the States" by his father, a rich manufacturer of Irish whiskeys in Dublin, that he might learn something of the ways of the New World. And there was not the slightest doubt in the minds of his comrades, so Fred assured Oliver, that he had not only won his diploma. but that the sum of his knowledge along several other lines far exceeded that of any one of his contemporaries. His allowances came regularly every month, through the hands of Cockburn, who had known him in London, and whose bank cashed McFudd's remittances, a fact which enabled "my lord," to a greater extent than the others, to keep an eye on the Irishman's movements and expenditures.

Whatever deviltry was inaugurated on this top floor during the day as well as the night—and it was pretty constant—could be traced without much difficulty to this irrepressible young Irishman. If Tomlins found his dress

suit put to bed, with a pillow for a body and his crush-hat for a head; or Cranch found Waller's lay figure (Waller often used his bedroom as a studio) sitting bolt upright in his easy-chair, with its back to him reading a newspaper, — the servant having been told to announce to Cranch, the moment she opened the door, that "a gentleman was waiting for him in his room;" or Cockburn was sent off on some wild-goose chase uptown, it was safe to say that Mac was at the bottom of it all.

If, Fred added impressively, this rollicking, devil-may-care, perfectly sound and hearty young Hibernian had ever been absolutely, entirely, and completely sober since his sojourn in the land of the free, no one of his fellow boarders had ever discovered it.

Of this motley gathering "Ruffle-shirt" Tomlins, the swell, "Fog-horn" Cranch, the auctioneer, "Walrus" Waller, the sheep painter, "My Lord" Cockburn, the Englishman, Fred Stone, and Cornelius McFudd not only occupied the bedrooms, but had seats at Miss Teetum's table, four flights below. Bianchi and the others were the guests of the evening.

All this, and more, Fred poured into Oliver's willing ear in loud or soft tones, dependent upon

the particular kind of bedlam that was loose in the room at the moment, as they sat side by side on the floor, Oliver's back supported by a pillow which Tomlins had brought from his own bed and tucked behind his shoulders with his own hand.

This courtesy had been followed by another, quite as comforting and as thoughtful. Cockburn, the moment Oliver's back touched the wall, had handed him a toothbrush mug without a handle, filled to the brim with a decoction of Cockburn's own brewing, compounded hot according to McFudd's receipt, and poured from an earthen pitcher kept within reach of Cockburn's hand, and to which Oliver, in accordance with his habitual custom, had merely touched his lips, he being the most temperate of young gentlemen.

While they talked on, stopping now and then to listen to some outburst of Cranch, whose voice drowned all others, or to snatches of song from Wenby Simmons, the musician, or from Julius Bianchi, Waller's voice managed to make itself felt above the din with an earnestness that gained the attention and calmed all the others.

"You don't know what you're all talking about," he was heard to say. He was still

astride his chair, his pipe in his hand. "Inness's picture was the best thing we had in the Exhibition, except Eastman Johnson's 'Negro Life at the South.' Kensett's 'Lake George' was "—

"What — that Inness smear?" retorted "My Lord" Cockburn, who still stood with the coal-scuttle in his hand ready for another chorus. "Positively, Waller, you Americans amuse me. Do you really think that you've got anybody about you who can paint anything worth having"—

"Oh! oh! Hear the high-cockalorum! Oh! oh!"

The sheep painter raised his hand to command silence.

"Do I think we've got anybody about here who can paint, you fog-headed noodle from Piccadilly? We've got a dozen young fellows in this very town that put more real stuff into their canvases than all your men put together. They don't tickle their things to death with detail. They get air and vitality and out of doors into their work, and"—

"Names! Names!" shouted "My Lord" Cockburn, rattling the scuttle to drown the answers to his questions.

"George Inness for one, and young McEntee

and Sanford Gifford, and Eastman Johnson, Page, Casilear — a lot of them!" shouted "the Walrus." "Go to the Exhibition and see for yourself, and you"—

The rest of the discussion was lost to Oliver's ears owing to the roar of Cranch's fog-horn, act companied by another vigorous shaking of the scuttle, which the auctioneer caught away from "My Lord" Cockburn's grasp, and the pounding of Simmons's fingers on the yellow keys of the wheezy piano.

The tribute to Inness had not been missed by Oliver, despite the deafening noise accompanying its utterance. He remembered another green smear, that hung in Mr. Crocker's studio, to which that old enthusiast always pointed as the work of a man who would yet be heard from if he lived. He had never appreciated it himself at the time, but now he saw that Mr. Crocker must be right.

Some one now started the chorus —

"Down among the dead men, down."

Instantly every man was on his feet, crowding about the piano, Oliver catching the inspiration of the moment and joining in with the others. The quality of his voice must have caught the ear of some of the singers, for they gradually

lowered their tones, leaving Oliver's voice almost alone.

Fred's eye glowed with pleasure. His newfound friend was making a favorable impression. He at once urged Oliver to sing one of his own Southern songs as the darkies sung them at home, and not as they were caricatured by the end men in the minstrel shows.

Oliver, at first abashed, and then anxious to contribute something of his own in return for all the pleasure they had given him, hummed the tune for Simmons, and in the hush that followed began one of the old plantation songs that Malachi had taught him, beginning with —

"De old black dog he bay at de moon, Away down yan ribber. Miss Bull-frog say she git dar soon, Away down yan ribber."

As the melody rang through the room, now full and strong, now plaintive as the cooing of a dove or the moan of a whippoorwill, the men stood stock-still, their wondering eyes fixed on the singer, and it was not until the timely arrival of the Bull-frog and the escape of her lover had been fully told that the listening crowd allowed themselves to do much more than breathe. Then there came a shout that nearly raised the roof. The peculiar sweetness of Oliver's voice,

the quaintness of the melody, the grotesqueness of his gestures, — for it was pantomime as well as music,— and the quiet simplicity and earnestness with which it had all been done had captivated every man in the room. It was Oliver's first triumph, the first in all his life.

And the second was not far off, for in the midst of all the uproar that followed, as he resumed his place on the floor, Cockburn sprang to his feet and proposed Mr. Oliver Horn as a full member of the Skylarkers' Club. This was carried unanimously, and a committee of two, consisting of "Ruffle-shirt" Tomlins and Waller, were forthwith appointed to acquaint the said member, who stood three feet away, of his election, and to escort him to Tomlins's chair, the largest and most imposing-looking one in the room. This action was indorsed by the shouts and cat-calls of all present, accompanied by earthquake shakings of the coal-scuttle and the rattling of chair legs and canes on the floor.

Oliver rose to his feet and stood blushing like a girl, thanking those about him in halting sentences for the honor conferred upon him. Then he stammered something about his not deserving their praise, for he could really sing very few songs, only those he had sung at home to help out an occasional chorus, and that he would

be delighted to join in another song if any one of the gentlemen present would start the tune.

These last suggestions being eminently distasteful to the group, were immediately drowned in a series of protests, the noise only ceasing when "Fog-horn" Cranch mounted a chair and in his best real-estate voice commanded silence.

"Ladies and Gentlemen," thundered the auctioneer, "I have the honor to announce that the great barytone, Mr. Oliver Horn, known to the universe as the 'Musical Cornucopia,' late of the sunny South, and now a resident of this metropolis, will delight this company by singing one of those soul-moving plantation melodies which have made his name famous over two hemispheres. Mr. 'Pussy Me-ow' Simmons, the distinguished fiddling pianist, late of the Bowery, very late, I may remark, and now on the waiting list at Wallack's Theatre, every other month, I am told, will accompany him."

"Hear! Hear!" "Horn! Horn!" "Don't let him get away, Fred." "Song! Song!" was heard all over the room.

Oliver again tried to protest, but he was again shouted down by cries of "None of that!" "Can't fool us." "You know a barrel of 'em." "Song! Song!"

Cranch broke in again: "Mr. Horn's modesty, gentlemen, greatly endears him to his fellow members, and we love him the better for it, but all the same,"—and he raised his hand with the same gesture he would have used had it held an auctioneer's hammer,—"all in favor of his singing again say 'Aye! Going! Going! Gone! The ayes have it." In the midst of the cheering Cranch jumped from the chair, and taking Oliver by the hand as if he had been a young prima donna at her first appearance, led him to the piano with all the airs and graces common to such an occasion.

Our young hero hesitated a moment, looked about in a pleased but helpless way, and nerving himself, tried to collect his thoughts sufficiently to recall some one of the songs that were so familiar to him at home. Then Sue's black eyes looked into his, — there must always be a woman helping Oliver, — and the strains of the last song he had sung with her the night before he left home floated through his brain. (These same eyes were gazing into another's at the moment, but our young Oliver was unconscious of that lamentable fact.)

"Did you ever happen to hear 'The old Kentucky Home'?" Oliver asked Simmons. "No? Well, it goes this way," and he struck the chords.

"You play it," said Simmons, rising from the stool.

"Oh, I can only play the chords, and not all of them right," and he took Simmons's seat. "Perhaps I can get through. I'll try it," he added simply, and squared himself before the instrument and began the melody.

"The sun shines bright in the old Kentucky home,
'T is summer, the darkies are gay;
The corn-top's ripe and the meadow is in bloom,
While the birds make music all the day.

"Weep no more, my lady—oh, weep no more to-day! We'll sing one song for the old Kentucky home, For the old Kentucky home far away."

As the words rolled from his lips Oliver seemed to forget the scene before him. Somehow he could see the light in Sue's eyes, as she listened, and hear her last words. He could hear the voice of his mother, and feel her hand on his head; and then, as the soft vowels and cadences of the quaint melody breathed themselves out, he could catch again the expression of delight on the face of Malachi, who had taught him the song, as he listened, his black cheek in his wrinkled palm. It was a supreme moment with Oliver. The thrill of happiness that had quivered through him for days, inten-

sified by this new heaven of Bohemia, vibrated in every note he uttered.

The effect was equally startling on those about him. Cranch craned his head, and for once lowered his voice to a whisper in speaking to the man next him. Bowdoin, the painter, and one of the guests, left his seat and tiptoed to the piano, his eyes riveted on Oliver's face, his whole being absorbed in the melody. Bianchi and Waller so far lost themselves that their pipes went out, while Simmons was so entranced that he forgot to applaud when Oliver finished.

The effect produced was not so much due to the quality in Oliver's voice, sweet and sympathetic as it was, nor to his manner of singing, nor to the sentiment of the song itself, but to the fact of its being, with its clear, sweet notes, a positive contrast to all of noise and clamor that had gone before. This fact, more than any other, made his listeners hold their breath in wonder and delight. It came like the song of a bird bursting out after a storm and charming every one with the beauty of its melody, while the thunder of the tempest still reverberated through the air.

In the hush of the death-like stillness that followed, the steady tramp of feet was heard on the staircase, and the next instant the head

of a young man, with a rosy face and sidechop coachman whiskers, close-cut black hair, and shoe-button eyes, glistening with fun, was craned around the jamb of the door.

It was the property of Mr. Cornelius Mc-Fudd!

He was in full evening dress, and as immaculate as if he had stepped out of a bandbox.

Whatever stimulants had permeated his system and fired his imagination had evidently escaped his legs, for they were as steady as those of a tripod. His entrance, in a measure, restored the assemblage to its normal condition. Mr. McFudd raised his hand impressively, checking the customary outbreak that always greeted his appearance on occasions like this, struck a deprecatory attitude, and said solemnly, in a rich North of Ireland accent, —

"Gentlemen, it is with the greatest surprise that I find ye contint to waste your time over such riotous proceedings as I know have taken place here to-night, when within a block of yez is a perfarmance that would delight yer souls. Think of a man throwing a handspring over "—

At this instant a wet sponge was fired pointblank from an open bedroom door, missed Mc-Fudd's head by an inch, and bounded down the staircase.

"Thank ye, Admiral Lord Cockburn, for yer civility," cried McFudd, bowing low to the open bedroom door, "and for yer good intintions, but ye missed it, as yer did yer mither's blessing—and as ye do most of the things ye try to hit." This was said without raising his voice or changing a muscle of his face, his eyes fixed on the door inside of which stood Cockburn.

McFudd continued, "The perfarmance of this acrobat is one of the"—

Cries of "Don't you see you disturb the music?" "Go to bed!" "Somebody sit on McFudd!" etc., filled the room.

"Go on, gentlemen. Continue your insults; defame the name of an honest man who is attimpting to convey to yer dull comprehinsions some idea of the wonders of the acrobatic ring. I'll turn a handspring for yez meself that will illustrate what I mane," and Mr. McFudd carefully removed his coat and began sliding up his shirt-cuffs.

At this juncture "My Lord" Cockburn, who had come from behind the door, winked significantly at Waller, and creeping on all fours behind McFudd, just as that gentleman was about lifting his legs aloft, swept him off his feet by a twist of his arm, and deposited him on the small of his back next to Oliver, his head rest-

AN OLD SONG

ing against the wall. There Waller stood over him with a chair, which he threatened to turn over him upside down and sit on, if the prostrate Irishman moved an inch.

McFudd waved his hand sadly, as if in acquiescence to the inscrutable laws of fate, begged the gentlemen present to give no further thought to his existence, and after a moment of silence continued his remarks on the acrobatic ring to Oliver in the same monotonous tone of voice which he had addressed to the room before Cockburn's flank movement had made him bite the dust.

"It may seem to you, Mr. — Mr. — I haven't your name, sir," and he bent his head toward Oliver.

"Horn, sir," Oliver suggested, — "Oliver Horn."

"Thanks; it may seem to you that I'm exaggerating, Mr. Oliver Horn, the wonder of this perfarmance, but"—

The rest of the sentence, despite the Hibernian's well-intentioned efforts, was not addressed to Oliver, but to the room at large, or rather to its furniture, or to be still more exact, to the legs of the piano, and such chairs and tables as the Irishman's prostrate body bumped into on the way to his room. For at that in-

stant Waller, to save Oliver, as he pretended, from further annoyance, had caught the distinguished Hibernian by both feet, and in that position dragged him along the floor, as if he had been a wheelbarrow, McFudd's voice never changing its tone as he continued his remarks on physical culture, and the benefits which would accrue to the human race if they would practise the acrobat's handspring.

When Fred and Oliver had closed their bedroom door for the night, the guests having departed, and all the regular boarders being supposedly secure in their beds (Fred without much difficulty had persuaded Oliver to share his own bed over night), there came a knock at Fred's door, and the irrepressible Irishman stalked in.

He had removed his vest, high collar, and shoes, and had the air and look of an athlete. The marvellous skill of the acrobat still occupied his mind.

"Don't disturb yourself, my dear Stone, but me deloightful conversation with yer friend, Mr. Horn, was interrupted by that wild beast of a Waller, and I wanted to finish it. I am quite sure I can do it — the trick I was telling ye of. I've been practizing in me room. It's as easy as rolling off a jaunting car." "No, Mac, old man. Go to bed again," pleaded Fred.

"Not till I show ye, me boy, one of the most

beautiful feats of agility "-

"Come off, Mac, I say," cried Fred, catch-

ing the Irishman around the waist.

"I'll come nothing! Unhand me, gentlemen, or by the "— and tearing himself free, McFudd threw a handspring with the ease of a professional, toppled for a moment, his feet in the air, scraped along the whitewashed wall with his heels, and sweeping the basins and pitchers filled with water from the washstand, measured his length on the floor. Then came the crash of broken china, a deluge of water, and Fred and Oliver began catching up sponges and towels to stay the flood.

A minute later a man in a long gray beard and longer nightrobe, one of the regular boarders, bounded up the stairs two steps at a time,

and dashed through Fred's open door.

"By thunder, boys!" he cried, "I don't mind how much noise you make, rather like it; but what the devil are you trying to drown us out for? Wife is soaking — it's puddling down on our bed!"

By this time every door had been flung open, and the room was filled with half-dressed men.

"It's that lunatic, McFudd. He's been to the circus and thinks he's Martello," cried Fred, pointing to the prostrate Irishman, with the sponge which he had been squeezing out in the coal-scuttle.

"Or the clown," remarked Waller, stooping over McFudd, who was now holding his sides and roaring with laughter.

Long after Fred had fallen asleep, Oliver lay awake thinking of the night's pleasure. He had been very, very happy — happier than he had been for many months. The shouts of approval on his election to membership, the rounds of applause that had followed his rendering of the simple negro melodies, resounded in his ears, and the joy of it all still tingled through his veins. This first triumph of his life had brought with it a certain confidence in himself, a new feeling of self-reliance, of being able to hold his own among men, something he had never experienced before. This made it all the more exhilarating.

And the company!

Real live painters who sold their pictures and who had studied in Munich, and who knew Paris and Dresden and all the wonderful cities of which Mr. Crocker had talked. And real musicians, too, who played at theatres; and

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Englishmen from London, and Irishmen from Dublin, and all so jolly and unconventional and companionable! It was just as Mr. Crocker had described it, and just what he had about despaired of ever finding. Surely his cup of happiness was full to the brim.

We can forgive him, we who still remember those glimpses behind the scenes - our first and never to be forgotten! How real everything seemed, even the grease paint, the wigs, and the clothes. And the walking gentleman and the leading old man and low comedian! What splendid fellows they were, and how we sympathized with them in their enforced exiles from a beloved land! How they suffered from scheming brothers who had robbed them of their titles and estates, or flint-hearted fathers who had turned them out of doors because of their infatuation for their "art" or because of their love for some dame of noble birth or simple lass, whose name, "me boy, will be forever sacred!" How proud we were of knowing them, and how delighted they were at knowing us, and they so much older, too! And how tired we got of it all, and of them, and of all their kind when our eyes became accustomed to the glare and we saw how cheap and commonplace it all was and how much of its glamour and

charm had come from our own inexperience and enthusiasm — and youth!

As Oliver lay with wide-open eyes, going over every incident of the evening, he remembered, with a certain touch of exultant pride, a story his father had told him of the great Poe. and he fell to wondering whether the sweetness of his own song, falling on ears stunned by the jangle of the night, had not produced a similar effect. Poe, his father had said, on being pressed for a story in the midst of a night of revelry in a famous house on Kennedy Square, had risen from his seat and repeated the Lord's Prayer with such power and solemnity that the guests, one and all, stunned and sobered, had pushed their chairs from the table and had left the house. He remembered just where his father sat when he told the story and the impression it had made upon him at the time. He wished Kennedy Square had been present to-night to have heard him and to have seen the impression his song had made upon those gathered about him.

Kennedy Square! What would dear old Richard Horn, with his violin tucked lovingly under his chin, and gentle, white-haired Nathan, with his lips caressing his flute, have thought of it all, as they listened to the uproar of Cockburn's

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coal-scuttle? And that latter-day Chesterfield, Colonel John Howard Clayton, of Pongateague, whose pipe-stemmed madeira glasses were kept submerged in iced finger-bowls until the moment of their use, and whose rare burgundies were drunk out of ruby-colored soap-bubbles warmed to an exact temperature. What would this old aristocrat have thought of McFudd's mixture and the way it was served?

No! It was just as well that Kennedy Square, at the moment of Oliver's triumph, was fast asleep.

IX

MISS TEETUM'S LONG TABLE

THE prying sun peeped through the dingy curtains of Fred's bedroom on the morning after Oliver's revels, stencilling a long slant of yellow light down its grimy walls, and awaking our young hero with a start. Except for the shattered remnants of the basins and pitchers that he saw as he looked around him, and the stringy towels, still wet, hanging over the backs of the chairs, he would not have recognized it as the same room in which he had met such brilliant company the night before—so kindly a glamour does the night throw over our follies.

With the vision of the room and its tokens of their frolic came an uneasy sense of an unpleasant remembrance. The thrill of his own triumph no longer filled his heart; only the memory of the uproar remained. As he caught sight of the broken pieces of china still littering the carpet, and recalled McFudd's sprawling figure, a slight color suffused his cheek.

The room itself, in the light of day, was not

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only cold and uninviting, but so bare of even the commonest comforts that Oliver shivered. The bottoms were half out of the chairs; the painted washstand stood on a square of chilly oilcloth; the rusty grate and broken hearth were unswept of their ashes, the carpet patched and threadbare. He wondered, as he studied each detail, how Miss Teetum could expect her boarders to be contented in such quarters.

He saw at a glance how much more cosey and restful the room might be made with the addition of a few touches here and there, — a colored print or two, a plaster cast, a bit of cheap stuff, or some gay-colored cushions. It surprised him, above all, to discover that Fred, who was studying art, and should therefore be sensitive to such influences, was willing to live amid such desolate surroundings.

When he stepped out into the square hall, the scene of the night's revelry, and glanced about him, the crude bareness and reckless disorder that the merciful glow of the gaslight and its attendant shadows had kindly concealed, stood out in bold relief under the white light of the day, now streaming through an oval skylight immediately above the piano. The floor was strewn with the various properties of the night's performance, — overturned stools, china

mugs, bits of lemon peel, stumps of cigars, and stray pipes, — while scattered about under the piano and between the legs of the chairs, and even upon the steps of the staircase, were the pieces of coal which Fog-horn Cranch and Waller, who held the scuttle, had pounded into bits when they produced that wild jangle which had added so much of dignity and power to the bass notes of the "Dead Man's Chorus."

These cold facts aroused in Oliver a sense of repugnance which he could not shake off. It was as if the head of some jolly clown of the night before had been suddenly thrust through the canvas of the tent in broad daylight, showing the paint, the wrinkles beneath, the yellow teeth, and the coarse mouth.

Oliver was about to turn back to Fred's room, this feeling of revolt strong upon him, when his attention was arrested by a collection of drawings that covered almost every square inch of the ceiling. To his astonishment he discovered that what in the smoke of the night before he had supposed to be only hasty sketches scrawled over the white plaster, were in reality, now that he saw them in a clearer atmosphere, effective pictures in pastel, oil, and charcoal. That the basis of these cartoons was but the grimy stain made by the water which had beaten through

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the rickety sash during the drive and thrash of winter storms, flooding the whitewashed ceiling and trickling down the side walls in smears of brown rust, did not lessen their value in his eyes.

Closer inspection showed him that these discolorations, some round or curved, others straight or angular, had been altered and amended, as the signatures indicated, by the deft pencils of Waller, Fred, Bowdoin, and the others, into flying Cupids, Dianas, Neptunes, and mermaids fit to grace the ceiling of a salon if properly enlarged; while the up-and-down smears had suggested the opportunity for caricaturing half the boarders of the house. Every fresh leak and its accompanying stains evidently presented a new problem to the painters, and were made the subject of prolonged study and much consultation before a brush was permitted to touch them, the point apparently being to help the discolorations express themselves with the fewest possible touches.

In addition to these decorations overhead, Oliver found, framed in on the cleaner plaster of the side walls, between broad bands of black paint, several taking bits of landscape in color and black and white: stretches of coast with quaint boats and dots of figures; winter wood

interiors with white plaster for snow and scrapings of charcoal for tree trunks, each one marked with that sure crispness of touch which denotes the master hand. Moreover, the panels of all the doors, as well as their jambs and frames, were ornamented with sketches in all mediums, illustrating incidents in the lives of the various boarders who occupied the rooms below, and who, so Fred told him afterward, stole into this sacred spot on the sly, to gloat over the night's work whenever a new picture was reported and the rightful denizens were known to be absent.

As he stood absorbed before these marvels of brush and pencil, scrutinizing each one in turn, his sense of repulsion for the débris on the floor gave way to a feeling of enthusiasm. Not only were the sketches far superior to any he had ever seen, but the way in which they were done and the uses of the several mediums were a revelation to him. It was only when Fog-horn Cranch's big voice roused him to consciousness that he realized where he was. The auctioneer was coming out of his room, resplendent in a striped suit, gaiters, and white necktie, — this being his real-estate day.

"My dear fellow," Cranch shouted, bringing his hand down on Oliver's shoulder, "do you know you've got a voice like an angel's?"

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Before Oliver could reply, My Lord Cockburn joined them, his first word one of pleasure at meeting him, and his second a hope that he would know him better; then Fred ran out, flinging on his coat and laughing as he came. Under these combined influences of praise and good cheer, Oliver's spirits rose and his blood began once more to surge through his veins. With his old-time buoyancy he put his arm through Fred's while the two tramped gayly down the four flights of stairs to be ushered into the long, narrow, stuffy dining-room on the basement floor, there to be presented to the two Misses Teetum, who as the young men entered bent low over their plates in unison. This perfunctory salute our young gentleman acknowledged by bowing grandly in return, after which he dropped into a seat next Fred's, his back to a tin box filled with plates, placed over the hot-air register, drew out a damp napkin from a bone ring, and took a bird's-eye view of the table and its occupants.

The two Misses Teetum sat one at either end—Miss Ann, thin, covere, precise; Miss Sarah, stout, coy, and a trifle kittenish, as doubtless became a young woman of forty-seven, and her sister's junior by eight years. Miss Ann had evidently passed the dead-line of middle age,

and had given up the fight, and was fast becoming a very prim and very proper old lady; but Miss Sarah, being out of range, could still smile, and nod her head, and shake her curls, and laugh little hollow, girlish laughs, and otherwise disport herself in a light and kittenish way, after the manner of her day and age. All of which betrayed not only her earnest desire to please, but her increasing anxiety to get in under matrimonial cover before one of Father Time's sharpshooters picked her off, and thus ended her youthful career.

The guests seated on either side of these two presiding goddesses, Oliver was convinced, as he studied the double row of faces, would have stretched the wondering eyelids of Kennedy Square to their utmost limits.

Old Mr. Lang, who with his invalid wife occupied the room immediately below Fred's, and who had been so nearly drowned out the night before because of McFudd's acrobatic tendencies, sat on Fred's left. Properly clothed and in his right mind, he proved to be a most delightful old gentleman, with gold spectacles and snow-white side whiskers, and a welcoming smile for every one who entered. Fred said that the smile never wavered even when the old gentleman had been up all night with his wife.

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Across the table, with her eyeglasses trained on Oliver, half concealed by a huge china "compoteer" (to quote the waitress), and at present filled with last week's fruit, caulked with almonds, sat Mrs. Southwark Boggs—sole surviving relic of S. B., Esq. This misfortune she celebrated by wearing his daguerreotype, set in plain gold, as a brooch with which she fastened her crocheted collar. She was a thin, faded, funereal-looking person, her body incased in a black silk dress, which looked as if it had been pressed and ironed over night, and her hands in black silk mitts which reached to her knuckles.

On Mrs. Boggs's right sat Bates, a rising young lawyer with political tendencies, — one of the first men to cut his hair so "Zou-Zou" that it stood straight up from his forehead; and next to him Morgan, the editor, who pored over manuscript while his coffee got cold; and then Nelson, and Webster, and Cummings, all graded in Miss Ann's mind as being eight, or ten, or twelve dollar a week men, depending on the rooms that they occupied; and farther along, toward Miss Sarah, Cranch and Cockburn, — five-dollar boys these (Fred was another), with the privilege of lighting their own coke fires, and of trimming the wicks and filling the bulbs

of their own burning-fluid lamps. And away down in the far corner, crumpled up in his chair, crouched the cheery little hunchback, Mr. Crumbs, who kept a book-stall on Astor Place, where Bayard Taylor, Irving, Halleck, Bryant, and many another member of the Century Club used to spend their late afternoons delving among the old volumes on his shelves.

All these regular boarders, including Fog-horn Cranch and Fred, breakfasted at eight o'clock. Waller, the painter, and Tomlins, the swell, breakfasted at nine. As to that descendant of the Irish kings, Mr. Cornelius McFudd, he rose at ten, or twelve, or two, just as the spirit (and its dilutions of the night before) moved or retarded him, and breakfasted whenever Miss Ann or Miss Sarah, who had presided continuously at the coffee-urn from eight to ten, could spare one of her two servants to carry a tray to his room.

Last and by no means least, with her eyes devouring every expression that flitted across the new arrival's face, there beamed out beside Miss Ann a tall, willowy young person, whom Fred, in answer to an inquiring lifting of Oliver's eyebrows, designated as the belle of the house. This engaging young woman really lived with her mother, in the next street, but flitted in and

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out, dining, or breakfasting, or spending a week at a time with her aunts, the Misses Teetum, whenever an opportunity offered—the opportunity being a vacant and non-paying room, one of which she was at the time enjoying.

This fair damsel, who was known to the boarders on the top floor as "our Phemy," and to the world at large as Miss Euphemia Teetum, - the real jewel in her name was Phœbe, but she had reset it, - had been especially beloved, so Fred informed Oliver, by every member of the club except Waller, who, having lived in boarding-houses all his life, understood her thoroughly. Her last flame - the fire was still smouldering - had been the immaculate Tomlins, who had won her heart by going into raptures, in one of his stage whispers, over the classic outlines of her face. This outburst resulted in Miss Euphemia appearing the following week in a silk gown, a Greek fillet, and no hoops, a costume which Waller faithfully portrayed on the side wall of the attic the night of her appearance - the fillet being reproduced by a strip of brass which the artist had torn from his easel and nailed to the plaster, and the classic curves of her hair by a ripple of brown paint.

This caricature nearly provoked a riot before the night was over, the whole club, including

even the fun-loving McFudd, denouncing Waller's act as an outrage. In fact, the Hibernian himself had once been so completely taken off his feet — it was the first week of his stay — by the winning ways of the young lady, that Miss Ann had begun to have high hopes of Euphemia's being finally installed mistress in one of those shadowy estates which the distinguished Hibernian described with such eloquence. That these hopes did not materialize was entirely due to Cockburn, who took pains to enlighten the good woman upon the intangible character of the Hibernian's possessions, thus saving the innocent maiden from the clutches of the bold, bad adventurer. At least, that had been Cockburn's account of it when he came upstairs.

But it was at dinner that same night — for Oliver at Fred's pressing invitation had come back to dinner — that the full galaxy of guests and regulars burst upon our hero. Then came not only Miss Euphemia Teetum in a costume especially selected for Oliver's capture, but a person still more startling and imposing, — so imposing, in fact, that when she entered the room one half of the gentlemen present made little backward movements with the legs of their chairs, as if intending to rise to their feet in honor of her presence.

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This prominent figure in fashionable life, who had now settled herself on the right of Miss Ann — the post of honor at the table—and who was smiling in so gracious and condescending a manner as her eye lighted on the several recipients of her favor, was none other than the distinguished Mrs. Schuyler Van Tassell of Tarrytown, another bird of passage, who had left her country-seat on the Hudson to spend the winter months in what she called the delights of "upper-tandem." She belonged to an ancient family, or at least her husband did, - he was under the sod, poor soul, and therefore at peace, -and having inherited his estate, a considerable one, was to be treated with every distinction.

These several personages of low and high degree interested our young gentleman quite as much as our young gentleman interested them. He made friends with them all, especially with the ladies, who all agreed that he was a most charming and accomplished youth. This good opinion became permanent when Oliver had paid each in turn the compliment of rising from his seat when any one of them entered the room, as much a habit with the young fellow as the taking off of his hat when he came into a house, but which was so rare a courtesy at Miss Tee-

tum's that each recipient appropriated the compliment as personal to herself.

These sentiments of admiration were shared, and to an alarming degree, by Miss Euphemia herself, who, on learning later that Oliver had decided to occupy half of Fred's room through the winter, had at once determined to remain during the week, the better to lay siege to his heart. This resolution, it is fair to Oliver to say, she abandoned before dinner was over, when her experienced eye detected a certain amused if not derisive smile playing around the corners of Oliver's mouth; a discovery which so impressed the young woman that she left him severely alone ever after.

And so it was that Oliver unpacked his trunk,—the same old hair trunk, studded with brass nails, that had held his father's wardrobe at college,—spread out and tacked up the various knickknacks which his mother and Sue and Miss Clendenning had given him when he had left the old home, and began to make himself comfortable on the top floor of Miss Teetum's boarding-house on Union Square.

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UR hero had been installed at Miss Teetum's for a month or more, when one night at dinner a tiny envelope about the size of a visiting card was brought in by the middleaged waitress and laid beside Simmons's plate. The envelope contained six orchestra seats at the Winter Garden, and was accompanied by a note which read as follows: "Bring some of the boys; the piece drags."

The musician studied the note carefully, and a broad smile broke over his face. As one of the first violins at the Winter Garden, with a wide acquaintance among desirable patrons of the theatre, he had peculiar facilities for obtaining free private boxes and orchestra chairs, not only at his own theatre, but often at Wallack's in Broome Street and the old Bowery. Simmons was almost always sure to have tickets when the new piece needed booming, or when an old play failed to amuse and the audiences had begun to shrink. Indeed, the mystery of Mrs.

Schuyler Van Tassell's frequent appearance in the left-hand proscenium box at the Winter Garden on Friday nights, a mystery unexplained among the immediate friends in Tarrytown, who knew how she husbanded her resources despite her accredited wealth, was no mystery at all to the guests at Miss Teetum's table, who were in the habit of seeing just such tiny envelopes handed to Simmons during soup, and duly passed by him to that distinguished leader of society. Should more than two tickets be enclosed, Mrs. Van T. would perhaps invite Mr. Ruffle-shirt Tomlins, or some other properly attired person, to accompany her, - never Miss Ann or the little hunchback, who dearly loved the play, but who could seldom afford to go. never anybody, in fact, who wore plain clothes or looked a compromising acquaintance.

On this night, however, Pussy Me-ow Simmons, ignoring Mrs. Van Tassell, turned to Oliver.

"Ollie," he whispered, — the formalities had ceased between the members of the Skylarks, — "got anything to do to-night?"

"No; why?"

And then Simmons, with various imaginary poundings of imaginary canes on the threadbare carpet beneath his chair, and with sundry half-

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smothered bursts of real laughter in which Fred and Oliver joined, unfolded his programme for the evening. — a programme which was agreed to so rapturously that the trio before dinner was over excused themselves to their immediate neighbors and bounded upstairs, three steps at a time. There they pulled the Walrus out of his bed and woke up McFudd, who had gone to sleep before dinner, and whom nobody had called. Then having sent my Lord Cockburn to find Ruffle-shirt Tomlins, who by this time was paying court to Miss Euphemia in the front parlor, and having pinned a ticket to Mr. Fog-horn Cranch's door, with instructions to meet them in the lobby the moment he returned, they all slipped on their overcoats, picked up their canes, and started for the theatre.

Six young fellows, all with red blood in their veins, steel springs under their toes, and laughter in their hearts! Six comrades, pals, good fellows, skipping down the avenue as gay as colts and happy as boys, — no thought for to-day and no care for to-morrow! Each man with a free ticket in his pocket and a show ahead of him! No wonder the bluecoats looked after them and smiled; no wonder the old fellow with the shaky legs, waiting at the corner for one of the squad to help him over, gave a sigh as he

watched McFudd, with cane in air, drilling his recruits, all five abreast. No wonder the tired shopgirls glanced at them enviously as they swung into Broadway, chanting the "Dead Man's Chorus," with Oliver's voice sounding clear as a bell above the din of the streets.

The play was a melodrama of the old, old school. There was a young heroine in white, and a handsome lover in top-boots and white trousers, and a cruel uncle who wanted her property. And there was a particularly brutal villain with leery eyes, ugly mouth, with one tooth gone, and an iron jaw like a bull-dog's. He was attired in a fur cap, brown corduroy jacket, with a blood-red handkerchief twisted about his throat, and he carried a bludgeon. When the double-dyed villain proceeded in the third act to pound the head of the lovely maiden to a jelly, at the instigation of the base uncle, concealed behind a painted tree trunk, and the lover rushed in and tried to save her, every pair of hands except Oliver's came together in raptures of applause, assisted by a vigorous hammering of canes on the floor.

"Pound away, Ollie," whispered Simmons; "that's what we came for; you are spoiling all our fun. The manager is watching us. Pound away, I tell you! There he is, inside that box."

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"I won't," said Oliver, in a tone of voice strangely in contrast with the joyousness of an hour before.

"Then you won't get any more free tickets," muttered Simmons, in surprise.

"I don't want them. I don't believe in murdering people on the stage, or anywhere else. That man's face is horrible; I'm sorry I came."

Simmons laughed, and, shielding his mouth with his hand, repeated Oliver's outburst to Waller, who, having first sent news of it down the line, reached over and shook Oliver's hand gravely, while he wiped a theatrical tear from his eye; while my Lord Cockburn, with feet and hands still busy, returned word to Oliver by Tomlins, "not to make a colossal ass of himself." Oliver bore their ridicule good-naturedly, but without receding from his opinion in any way, a fact which ultimately raised him in the estimation of the group. Only when the villain was thrown over the pasteboard cliff into a canvas sea by the gentleman in top-boots, to be devoured by sharks or cut up by pirates, or otherwise disposed of as befitted so bloodthirsty and cruel a monster, did Oliver join in the applause.

The play over, and Simmons having duly reported to the manager, who was delighted with

the activity of the feet, but who advised that next time the sticks be left at home, the happy party sailed up Broadway, this time by threes and twos, swinging their canes as before, and threading their way in and out of the throngs that filled the street.

The first stop was made at the corner of Thirteenth Street by McFudd, who turned his troop abruptly to the right and marched them down a flight of steps into a cellar, where they immediately attacked a huge washtub filled with steamed clams, and covered with a white cloth to keep them hot. This was the bar's free lunch. The clams devoured, six each, and the necessary beers paid for, the whole party started to retrace their steps, when Simmons stopped to welcome a newcomer who had entered the cellar unperceived by the barkeeper, and who was bending over the washtub of clams, engaged in picking out the smallest of the bivalves with the end of an iron fork. He had such a benevolent, kindly face, and was so courtly in his bearing, and spoke with so soft and gentle a voice, that Oliver, who stood next to Simmons, lingered to listen.

"Oh, my dear Simmons," cried the old gentleman, "we missed you to-night. When are you coming back to us? The orchestra is really

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getting to be deplorable. Miss Gannon quite broke down in her song. We must protest, my boy; we must protest. I saw you in front, but you should be wielding the baton. And is this young gentleman one of your friends?"

"Yes—Mr. Horn. Ollie, let me introduce you to Mr. Gilbert, the actor,"—and he laid his hand on Oliver's shoulder,—"dear John

Gilbert, as we always call him."

Oliver looked up into the kindly, sweet face of the man, and a curious sensation passed over him. Could this courtly, perfectly well-bred old gentleman, with his silver-white hair, beaming smile, and gentle voice, the equal of any of his father's guests, be an actor? Could he possibly belong to the profession which, of all others, Oliver had been taught to despise? The astonishment of our young hero was so great that for a moment he could not speak.

Simmons thought he read Oliver's mind, and

came to his rescue.

"My friend Mr. Horn did not like the play to-night, Mr. Gilbert," he said. "He thinks the death scene was horrible," and Simmons glanced smiling at the others, who stood at a little distance, watching the interview with great interest.

"Dear me, dear me, you don't say so!

What was it you objected to, may I ask?" There was a trace of anxiety in his voice.

"Why, the murder scene, sir. It seemed to me too dreadful to kill a woman in that way. I have n't forgotten it yet," and a distressed look passed over Oliver's face. "But then I have seen but very few plays," he added, — "none like that."

The old actor looked at him with a relieved expression.

"Ah, yes, I see. Yes, you're indeed right. As you say, it is quite a dreadful scene."

"Oh, then you've seen it yourself, sir," said Oliver in a relieved tone.

The old actor's eyes twinkled. He, too, had read the young man's mind, — not a difficult task when one looked down into Oliver's eyes.

"Oh, many, many times," he answered with a smile. "I have known it for years. In the old days, when they would smash the poor lady's head, they used to have a pan of gravel which they would crunch with a stick to imitate the breaking of the bones. It was quite realistic from the front, but that was given up long ago. How did *you* like the business tonight, Mr. Simmons?" and he turned to the musician.

"Oh, admirable, sir. We all thought it had

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never been better played or better put on," and he glanced again toward his companions, who stood apart, listening breathlessly to every word that fell from the actor's lips.

"Ah, I am glad of it. Brougham will be so pleased — and yet it shocked you, Mr. Horn — and you really think the poor lady minded it? Dear me! How pleased she will be when I tell her the impression it all made upon you! She's worked so hard over the part and has been so nervous about it! I left her only a moment ago — she and her husband wanted me to take supper with them at Riley's, the new restaurant on University Place, you know, famous for its devilled crabs. But I always like to come here for my clams. Allow me a moment," and he bent over the steaming tub, and skewering the contents of a pair of shells with his iron fork, held it out toward Oliver.

"Let me beg of you, Mr. Horn, to taste this clam. I am quite sure it is a particularly savory one. After this, my dear young friend, I hope you 'll have a better opinion of me,' and his eye twinkled. "I am really better than I look—indeed I am—and so, my dear boy, is this clam. Come, come, it is getting cold."

"What do you mean by 'a better opinion' of you, Mr. Gilbert?" stammered Oliver. He

had been completely captivated by the charm of the actor's manner. "Why should n't I think well of you? I don't understand."

"Why — because I strangled the poor lady to-night. You know, of course — that it was I

who played the villain."

"You!" exclaimed Oliver. "No, I did not, sir. Why, Mr. Gilbert, I can't realize — oh, I hope you'll forgive me for what I've said. I've only been in New York a short time, and"—

The old gentleman cut short Oliver's explanation with a wave of his fork, and looking down into the boy's face, said in a serious tone,—

"My son, you're quite right. Quite right—and I like you all the better for it. All such plays are dreadful. I feel just as you do about them, but what can we actors do? The public will have it that way."

Another little prejudice toppled from its pedestal, another household tradition of Oliver's smashed into a thousand pieces at his feet! This rubbing and grinding process of man against man; this seeing with one's own eyes and not another's, was fast rounding out and perfecting the impressionable clay of our young gentleman's mind. It was a lesson, too, the scribe is delighted to say, which our hero never forgot; nor did he ever forget the man who taught it.

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One of his greatest delights in after years was to raise his hat to this incomparable embodiment of the dignity and courtliness of the old school. The old gentleman had long since forgotten the young fellow, but that made no difference to Oliver; he would cross the street any time to lift his hat to dear John Gilbert.

The introduction of the other members of the club to the villain being over, — they had stood the whole time they were listening to the actor, each head uncovered, — McFudd again marshalled his troop and proceeded up Broadway, where, at Oliver's request, they were halted at the pedestal of the big bronze horse and within sight of their own quarters.

Here McFudd insisted that the club should sing "God Save the Queen" to the Father of his Country, where he sat astride of his horse, which was accordingly done, much to the delight of a couple of night watchmen who watched the entire performance and who, upon McFudd's subsequent inspection, proved to be fellow countrymen of the distinguished Hibernian.

Had the buoyant and irrepressible Irishman been content with this patriotic outburst as the final winding-up of the night's outing, and had he then and there betaken himself and his fellows off to bed, the calamity which followed

and which so nearly wrecked the Skylarks might have been avoided.

It is difficult at any time to account for the workings of Fate or to follow the course of its agents. The track of an earthworm destroys a dam; the parting of a wire wrecks a bridge; the breaking of a root starts an avalanche; the flaw in an axle dooms a train; the sting of a microbe depopulates a city. But none of these unseen, mysterious agencies was at work; nothing so trivial wrecked the Skylarks.

It was a German street band.

A band whose several members had watched McFudd and his party from across the street, and who had begun limbering their instruments before the sextet had ceased singing, regarding the situation, no doubt, as pregnant with tips.

McFudd did not give the cornet time to draw his instrument from its woollen bag before he had him by the arm.

"Don't put a mouthful of wind into that horn of yours until I spake to ye!" he cried in vociferous tones.

The leader stopped and looked at him in a dazed way.

"I have an idea, gentlemen," added McFudd, turning to his companions, and tapping his forehead. "I am of the opinion that this music

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would be wasted on the noight air, and so with your parmission I propose to transfer this orchestra to the top flure, where we can listen to their chunes at our leisure. Right about, face! Forward, march!" and McFudd advanced upon the band, wheeled the drum around, and, lockingarms with the cornet, started across the street for the stone steps.

"Not a word out of any o' ye till I get 'em in," McFudd continued in a low voice, fumbling in his pocket for his night-key.

The musicians obeyed mechanically and tiptoed one by one inside the dimly lighted hall, followed by Oliver and the others.

"Now take off your shoes; you've four flights of stairs to crawl up, and if ye make a noise until I'm ready for ye, off goes a dollar of your pay."

The bass drum carefully backed his instrument against the wall, sat down on the floor, and began pulling off his boots; the cornet and bassoon followed; the clarionet wore only his gum shoes, and so was permitted to keep them on.

"Now, Walley, me boy, do you go ahead and turn up the gas and open the piano; and Cockburn, old man, will ye kindly get the blower and tongs out of Freddie's room and the scuttle out

of Tomlins's closet and the Chinese gong that hangs over me bed? And all you fellers go ahead treading on whispers, d'ye moind?" said Mc-Fudd under his breath. "I'll bring up this gang with me. Not a breath out of any o'yez, remimber, till I get there. The drum's unhandy and we got to go slow wid it," and he slipped the strap over his head and started upstairs, followed by the band.

The ascent was made without a sound until old Mr. Lang's door was reached, when Mc-Fudd's foot slipped, and but for the bassoonist's head, both the Irishman and the drum would have rolled downstairs. Lang heard the sound, and recognizing the character of the attendant imprecation, did not get up. "It's only Mc-Fudd," he said quietly to his suddenly awakened wife.

Once safe upon the attic floor, the band, who were entering with great gusto into the spirit of the occasion, arranged themselves in a half circle about the piano, replaced their shoes, stripped their instruments of their coverings, — the cornetist breathing noiselessly into the mouthpieces to thaw out the frost, — and stood at attention for McFudd's orders.

By this time Simmons had taken his seat at the piano; Cockburn held the blower and tongs;

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Cranch, who on coming in had ignored the card tacked to his door, and who was found fast asleep in his chair, was given the coal-scuttle; and little Tomlins grasped his own wash-basin in one hand and Fred's poker in the other. Oliver was to sing the air, and Fred was to beat a tattoo on Waller's door with the buttend of a cane. The gas had been turned up, and every kerosene lamp had been lighted and ranged about the hall. Mc-Fudd threw off his coat and vest, cocked a Scotch smoking-cap over one eye, and seizing the Chinese gong in one hand and the wooden mallet in the other, climbed upon the piano and faced his motley orchestra.

"Attintion, gentlemen," whispered McFudd.
"The first chune will be 'Old Dog Tray,' because it begins wid a lovely howl. Remimber, now, when I hit this gong that's the signal for yez to begin—and ye'll all come together wid wan smash. Then the band will play a bar or two, and then every man Jack o' ye will go strong on the chorus. Are yez

ready?"

McFudd swung his mallet over his head; poised it for an instant; ran his eye around the circle with the air of an impresario; saw that the drum was in position, the horns and clarionet ready, the blower, scuttle, tongs, and other

instruments of torture in place, and hit the gong with all his might.

The crash that followed woke every boarder in the house and tumbled half of them out of their beds.

Long before the chorus had been reached all the doors had been thrown open, and the halls and passageways filled with the startled boarders. Then certain mysterious-looking figures in bed-gowns, waterproofs, and bath-robes began bounding up the stairs, and a collection of dishevelled heads were thrust through the door of the attic. Some of the suddenly awakened boarders tried to stop the din by protest; others threatened violence; one or two grinned with delight. Among these last was the little hunchback, swathed in a blanket like an Indian chief, and barefooted. He had rushed upstairs at the first sound as fast as his little legs could carry him, and was peering under the arms of the others, rubbing his sides with glee and laughing like a boy. Mrs. Schuyler Van Tassell, whose head and complexion were not ready for general inspection, had kept her door partly closed, opening it only wide enough when the other boarders rushed by to let her voice through — always an unpleasant organ when that lady had lost her temper.

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As the face of each new arrival appeared in the doorway, McFudd would bow gracefully in recognition of the honor of its presence, and redouble his attack on the gong. The noise he produced was only equalled by that of the drum, which never ceased for an instant, McFudd's orders being to keep that instrument going irrespective of time or tune.

In the midst of this uproar of brass, strings, sheepskin, washbowls, broken coal, pokers, and tongs, a lean figure in curl-papers and slippers, bright red calico wrapper reaching to the floor, and a lighted candle in one hand, forced its way through the crowd at the door and stood out in the glare of the gaslights facing

McFudd.

It was Miss Ann Teetum!

Instantly a silence fell upon the room.

"Gentlemen, this is outrageous!" she cried in a voice that ripped through the air like a saw. "I have put up with these disgraceful performances as long as I am going to. Not one of you shall stay in my house another night. Out you go in the morning, every one of you, bag and baggage!"

McFudd attempted to make an apology. Oliver stepped forward, the color mounting to his cheeks, and Waller began a protest at the

unwarrantable intrusion, but the infuriated little woman waved them all aside, and turning abruptly marched back through the door and down the staircase, preceded by the other female boarders. The little hunchback alone remained. He was doubled up in a knot, wiping the tears from his eyes, his breath gone from excessive laughter.

The Skylarkers looked at each other in blank astonishment. One of the long-cherished traditions of the house was the inviolability of this attic. Its rooms were let with an especial privilege guaranteeing its privacy, with free license to make all the noise possible, provided the racket was confined to that one floor. So careful had been its occupants to observe this rule, that noisy as they all were when once on the top floor, every man unlocked the front door at night with the touch of a burglar and crept upstairs as noiselessly as a footpad.

"I'm sorry, men," said McFudd, looking into the astounded faces about him. "I'm the last man, as ye know, to hurt anybody's feelings. But what the divil's got into the old lady? Who'd 'a' thought she would have heard a word of it down where she sleeps in the basement?"

"'T is the Van Tassell," grunted the Wal-



"GENTLEMEN, THIS IS OUTRAGEOUS!"



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rus. "She's so mesmerized the old woman lately that she don't know her own mind."

"What makes you think she put her up to it, Waller?" asked Cranch.

"I don't think — but it's just like her," answered Waller, with illogical prejudice.

"My eye! was n't she a beauty!" laughed Fred, and he picked up a bit of charcoal and began an outline of the wrapper and slippers on the side wall.

Tomlins, Cranch, and the others had no suggestions to offer. Their minds were too much occupied in wondering what was going to become of them in the morning.

The German band by this time had regained their usual solidity. The leader seemed immensely relieved. He had evidently expected the next apparition to be a bluecoat with a pair of handcuffs.

"Put their green jackets on 'em," McFudd said to the leader quietly, pointing to the instruments. "We're much obliged to you and your men for coming up," and he slipped some notes into the leader's hand. "Now get downstairs, every man o' ye, as aisy as if ye were walking on eggs. Cranch, old man, will ye see 'em out, to kape that infernal drum from butting into the Van Tassell's door, or we'll have

another hornet's nest. Begorra, there's wan thing very sure—it's little baggage I'll have to move out."

The next morning a row of six vacant seats stared Miss Ann out of countenance. The outcasts had risen early and had gone to Riley's for their breakfast. Miss Ann sat at the coffeeurn as stiff and erect as an avenging judge. Lofty purpose and grim determination were written in every line of her face. Mrs. Van Tassell was not in evidence. Her nerves had been so shattered by the "night's orgy," she had said to Miss Ann, that she should breakfast in her room. She further notified Miss Teetum that she should at once withdraw her protecting presence from the establishment, and leave it without a distinguished social head, if the dwellers on the top floor remained another day under the same roof with herself.

An ominous silence and depressing gloom seemed to hang over everybody. Several of the older men pushed back their plates and began drumming on the tablecloth with their fingers, a far-away look in their eyes. One or two talked in whispers, their coffee untasted. Old Mr. Lang looked down the line of empty seats and took his place with a dejected air. He was

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the oldest man in the house and the oldest boarder; this gave him certain privileges, one being to speak his mind.

"I understand," he said, unfolding his napkin and facing Miss Ann, "that you have or-

dered the boys out of the house."

"Yes, I have," snapped out Miss Teetum.

Everybody looked up. No one recognized the tone of her voice, it was so sharp and bitter.

"Why, may I ask?"

"I will not have my house turned into a

bear-garden, that 's why!"

"That's better than a graveyard," retorted Mr. Lang. "That's what the house would be without them. I can't understand why you object. You sleep in the basement and should n't hear a sound; my wife and I sleep under them every night. If we can stand it, you can. You send the boys away, Miss Teetum, and we'll move out."

Miss Ann winced under the shot, but she did not answer.

"Do you mean that you're going to turn the young gentlemen into the street, Miss Ann?" whined Mrs. Southwark Boggs in an injured tone, from her end of the table. "Are we going to have no young life in the house

at all? I won't stay a day after they 're gone."

Miss Teetum changed color, but she looked straight ahead of her. She evidently did not want her private affairs discussed at the table.

"I shall want my bill at the end of the week, now that the boys are to leave," remarked the little hunchback to Miss Ann as he bent over her chair. "Life is dreary enough as it is."

And so the boys stayed on.

Only one room became vacant at the end of the month. That was Mrs. Schuyler Van Tassell's.

XI

A CHANGE OF WIND

THE affair of the brass band, with its dramatic and most unlooked-for ending, left an unpleasant memory in the minds of the members of the club, especially in Oliver's. His training had been somewhat different from that of the others present, and his oversensitive nature had been more shocked than pleased by it all. While most of the other participants regretted the ill feeling which had been aroused in Miss Teetum's mind, they felt sure — in fact, they knew — that this heretofore kind and gentle hostess could never have fanned her wrath to so white a heat had not some other hand besides her own worked the bellows.

Suspicion first fell upon a new boarder, unaccustomed to the ways of the house, who, it was reported, had double-locked herself in at the first crash of the drum, and who had admitted, on being cross-examined by McFudd, that she had nearly broken her back in trying to barricade her bedroom door with a Saratoga trunk and a

washstand. This theory was abandoned when subsequent inquiries brought to light the fact that Mrs. Van Tassell, when the echoes of one of McFudd's songs had reached her ears, had stated a week before that no respectable boarding-house would tolerate uproars like those which took place almost nightly on the top floor, and that she would withdraw her protection from Miss Euphemia and leave the house at once and forever if the noise did not cease. This dire threat being duly reported to the two Misses Teetum had — it was afterward learned - so affected them both that Miss Ann had gone to bed with a chill and Miss Sarah had warded off another with a bowl of hot camomile tea.

This story, true as it undoubtedly was, did not entirely clear up the situation. One part of it sorely puzzled McFudd. Why did Miss Euphemia need Mrs. Van Tassell's protection, and why should the loss of it stir Miss Ann to so violent an outburst? This question no member of the Skylarks could answer.

The solution came that very night, and in the most unexpected way, Waller bearing the glad tidings.

Miss Euphemia, ignoring them all, was to be married at St. Mark's at 6 P. M. on the follow-

ing Monday, and Mrs. Van Tassell was to take charge of the wedding reception in the front parlor! The groom was the strange young man who had sat for some days beside Miss Euphemia, passing as Miss Ann's nephew, and who really was a well-to-do druggist with a shop on Astor Place. All of the regular boarders of the house were to be invited.

The explosion of this matrimonial bomb so cleared the air of all doubt as to the guilt of Mrs. Van Tassell, that a secret meeting, attended by every member of the Skylarks, was at once held in Waller's room, with the result that Miss Ann's invitations to the wedding were unanimously accepted. Not only would the resident members go, so the original resolution ran, but the nonresident and outside members would also be on hand to do honor to Miss Euphemia and her distinguished chaperone. This amendment being accepted, McFudd announced in a sepulchral tone that, owing to the severity of the calamity and to the peculiarly painful circumstances which surrounded their esteemed fellow Skylarker, the Honorable Sylvester Ruffle-shirt Tomlins, his fellow members would wear crape on their left arms for thirty days. This also was carried unanimously, every man except Ruffle-shirt Tomlins breaking out into the "Dead Man's Chorus,"

a song, McFudd explained, admirably fitted to the occasion.

When the auspicious night arrived, the several dress suits of the members were duly laid out on the piano and hung over the chairs, and each gentleman proceeded to array himself in costume befitting the occasion. Waller, who weighed 200 pounds, squeezed himself into McFudd's coat and trousers (McFudd weighed 150), the trousers reaching a little below the painter's knees. McFudd wrapped Waller's coat about his thin girth and turned up the bagging legs of the unmentionables six inches above his shoes. The assorted costumes of the other members were equally grotesque. The habiliments themselves were of proper cut and make, according to the standards of the time, — spike-tailed coats, white ties, patent-leather pumps, and the customary trimmings, — but the effects produced were as ludicrous as they were incongruous, though the studied bearing of the gentlemen was meant to prove their unconsciousness of the fact.

The astonishment that rested on Mrs. Van Tassell's face when this motley group filed into the parlor and with marked and punctilious deference paid their respects to the bride, and the wrath that flashed in Miss Euphemia's eyes, became ever after part of the traditions of the

club. Despite Mrs. Van Tassell's protest against the uproar on the top floor, she had invariably spoken in high terms to her friends and intimates of these very boarders, — their acquaintance was really part of her social capital, — commenting at the same time upon their exalted social and artistic positions. In fact, many of her own special guests had attended the wedding solely in the hope of being brought into more intimate relations with this distinguished group of painters, editors, and musicians, some of whom were already being talked about.

When, however, McFudd stood in the corner of Miss Teetum's parlor like a half-scared boy, pulling out the fingers of Waller's kid gloves, an inch too long for him; and Waller, Fred, and My Lord Cockburn stumbled over the hearthrug one after the other; and Oliver, feeling like a guilty man and a boor, bowed and scraped like a dancing-master; and Bowdoin, the painter, and Simmons and Fog-horn Cranch talked platitudes with faces as grave as undertakers, the expectant special guests invited by Mrs. Van Tassell began to look upon her encomiums as part of an advertising scheme to fill Miss Teetum's rooms.

The impression made upon the Teetum contingent by the appearance and manners of the

several members—even Oliver's reputation was ruined — was equally disastrous. It was perhaps best voiced by the druggist groom, when he informed Mrs. Van T. from behind his lemoncolored glove that "if that was the gang he had heard so much of, he did n't want no more of 'em."

But these and other jollifications were not long to continue. Causes infinitely more serious were at work undermining the foundations of the Skylarks. The Lodge of Poverty, to which they all belonged, gay as it had often been, was slowly closing its door; the unexpected, which always hangs over life, was about to happen; the tie which bound these men together was slowly loosening. Its members might give the grip of fellowship to other members in other lodges over the globe, but no longer in this one on the top floor of the house on Union Square.

One morning McFudd broke the seal of an important-looking letter bearing a Dublin postmark on the upper right-hand corner of the envelope, and the family crest on its flap. For some moments he sat still, looking straight before him. Then two tears stole out and glistened on his lashes.

"Boys," he said slowly, "the governor says

I must come home," and he held up a steamer ticket and a draft that barely equalled his dues for a month's board and washing.

That night he pawned his new white overcoat with the bone buttons and velvet collar, the one his father had sent him, and which had been the envy of every man in the club, and invested every penny of the proceeds in a supper to be given to the Skylarks. The invitation ran as follows:—

Mr. Cornelius McFudd respectively requests the pleasure of your presence at an informal wake to be held in honor of a double-breasted overcoat, London cut. The body and tail will be the ducks, and the two sleeves and velvet collar the Burgundy.

Riley's: 8 P. M. Third floor back.

The following week he packed his two tin boxes, boarded the Scotia, and sailed for home.

The keystone having dropped out, it was not long before the balance of the structure came down about the ears of the members. My Lord Cockburn the following week was ordered South by the bank, to look after some securities locked up in a vault in a Georgia trust company, and

which required a special messenger to recover them — the growing uneasiness in mercantile circles over the political outlook of the country having assumed a serious aspect. Cockburn had to swim rivers, he wrote Oliver in his first letter, and cross mountains on horseback, and sleep in a negro hut, besides having a variety of other experiences, to say nothing of several hairbreadth escapes, none of which availed him, as he returned home, after all, without the bonds.

These financial straws, indicating the direction and force of the coming political winds, began to accumulate. The lull before the hurricane—the stagnation in commercial circles became so ominous that soon the outside members and guests of the club ceased coming, being diligently occupied in earning their bread; and then Simmons sent the piano home - it had been loaned to him by reason of his profession and position — and only Fog-horn Cranch. Waller, Fred, Oliver, and Ruffle-shirt Tomlins were left. After a while Waller gave up his room and slept in his studio and got his meals at the St. Clair, or went without them, so light, by reason of the hard times, was the demand for sheep pictures of Waller's particular make. And later on Tomlins went abroad, and Cranch moved West. And so the ruin of the club was

complete; and so, too, this merry band of roysterers, with one or two exceptions, passes out of these pages.

Dear boys of the long ago, what has become of you all since those old days in that garret room on Union Square? Tomlins, I know, turned up in Australia, where he married a very rich and very lovely woman, because he distinctly stated both of those facts in an exuberant letter to Oliver when he invited him to the wedding. "Not a bad journey - only a step, my dear Ollie, and we shall be so delighted to see you." I know this to be true, for Oliver showed me the letter. Bowdoin went to Paris, where, as we all remember, he had a swell studio opening on to a garden, somewhere near the Arc de Triomphe. and had carriages stop at his door, and a butler to open it, and two maids in white caps to help the ladies off with their wraps. Poor Cranch died in Montana while hunting for gold, and My Lord Cockburn went back to London.

But does anybody know what has become of McFudd,—irresistible, irresponsible, altogether delightful McFudd? that condensation of all that was joyous, rollicking, and spontaneous; that devotee of the tub and pink of neatness, immaculate, clean-shaven, and well groomed; that soul of good nature, which no number of

flowing bowls could disturb, nor succeeding headaches dull; that most generous of souls, whose
first impulse was to cut squarely in half everything he owned, and give you your choice of the
pieces, and who never lost his temper until you
refused them both. If you, my dear boy, are
still wandering about this earth, and your eye
should happen to fall on these pages, remember,
I send you my greeting. If you have been sent
for, and have gone aloft to cheer those others
who have gone before, and who could spare you
no longer, speak a good word for me, please, and
then, perhaps, I may shake your hand again.

With the dissolution of the happy coterie, there came to Oliver many a lonely night under the cheap lamp, the desolate hall outside looking all the more desolate and uninviting with the piano gone and the lights extinguished.

Yet these nights were not altogether distasteful to Oliver. Fred had noticed for months that his room-mate no longer entered into the frolics of the club with the zest and vim that characterized the earlier days of the young Southerner's sojourn among them. Our hero had said nothing while the men had held together, and to all outward appearances had done his share, not only with his singing, but in any other way

in which he could help on the merriment. He had covered the space allotted to him on the walls with caricatures of the several boarders below. He had mixed the salad at Riley's the night of McFudd's farewell supper, with his sleeves rolled up to the elbows and the cook's cap on his head. He had lined up with the others at Brown's, on the Bowery; drank his "crystal cocktails," the mildest of beverages, and had solemnly marched out again with his comrades in a lock-step, like a gang of convicts. He had indulged in forty-cent opera, leaning over the iron railing of the top row of the Academy of Music, and had finished the evening at Pfaff's, drinking beer and munching hardtack and pickles, and had laughed and sung in a dozen other equally absurd escapades. And yet it was as plain as daylight to Fred that Oliver's heart was no longer centred in the life about him.

The fact is, the scribe is compelled to admit, the life indulged in by these merry Bohemians had begun to pall upon this most sensitive of young gentlemen. It really had not satisfied him at all. This was not the sort of life that Mr. Crocker meant, he had said to himself after a night at Riley's, when Cranch had sounded his horn so loud that the proprietor had threatened to turn the whole party into the street.

Mr. Crocker's temperament was too restful to be interested in such performances. As for himself, he was tired of it.

Nothing of all this did he keep from his mother. The record of his likes and dislikes, which formed the subject matter of his daily letters, was an absorbing study with her, and she let no variation of the weather-vane of his tastes escape her. Nor did she keep their contents from her intimate friends. She had read to Colonel Clayton one of his earlier ones, in which he had told her of the concerts, and of the way Cockburn had served the brew that McFudd had concocted, and had shown him an illustration Oliver had drawn on the margin of the sheet, an outline of the china mug that held the mixture, to which that Chesterfield of a Clayton had replied,—

"What did I tell you, madam — just what I expected of those Yankees — punch from mugs! Bah!"

She had, too, talked their contents over with Amos Cobb, who, since the confidence reposed in him by the Horn family, had become a frequent visitor at the house.

"There's no harm come to him yet, madam, or he would n't write you of what he does. Boys will be boys. Let him have his fling," the

Vermonter had replied, with a gleam of pleasure in his eye. "If he has the stuff in him that I think he has, he will swim out and get to higher ground; if he has n't, better let him drown early. It will give everybody less trouble."

The dear lady had lost no sleep over these escapades. She, too, realized that as long as Oliver poured out his heart unreservedly to her there was little to fear. In her efforts to cheer him she had sought, in her almost daily letters sent him in return, to lead his thoughts into other channels. She knew how fond he had always been of the society of women, and how necessary they were to his happiness, and she begged him to go out more. "Surely there must be some young girls in so great a city who can help to make your life happier," she wrote.

In accordance with her suggestions, he had at last put on his best clothes and had accompanied Tomlins and Fred to some very delightful houses away up in Thirty-third Street, and another on Washington Square, and still another near St. Mark's Place, where his personality and his sweet, sympathetic voice had gained him friends and most pressing invitations to call again. Some he had accepted, and some he had not; it depended very largely on his mood and upon the people whom he met. If they reminded

him in any way, either in manners or appointments, of his life at home, he went again; if not, he generally stayed away.

Among these was the house of his employer, Mr. Slade, who had treated him with marked kindness, not only inviting him to his own house, but introducing him to many of his friends, an unusual civility Oliver discovered afterward, not many of the clerks being given a seat at Mr. Slade's table. "I like his brusque, hearty manner," Oliver wrote to his mother after the first visit. "His wife is a charming woman, and so are the two daughters, quite independent and fearless, and entirely different from the girls at home, but most interesting and so well bred!"

Another incident, too, had greatly pleased not only Oliver and his mother, but Richard as well. It happened that a consignment of goods belonging to Morton, Slade & Co. was stored in a warehouse in Charleston, and it became necessary to send one of the clerks South to reship or sell them, the ordinary business methods being unsafe, owing to the continued rumblings of the now rapidly approaching political storm, a storm that promised to be infinitely more serious than the financial stringency. The choice had fallen on Oliver, he being a Southerner, and knowing the ways of the people. He had ad-

vised with his mother, and stood ready to leave at an hour's notice, when Mr. Slade's heart failed him.

"It's too dangerous, my lad," he said to Oliver. "I could trust you, I know, and I believe you would return safely and bring the goods or the money with you, but I should never forgive myself if anything should happen to you. I will send an older man." And he did.

It was at this time that Oliver had received Cockburn's letter telling him of his own experiences, and he therefore knew something of the risks a man would run, and could appreciate Mr. Slade's action all the more. Richard, as soon as he heard of it, had put down his tools, left his work bench, and had gone into his library, where he had written the firm a letter of thanks, couched in terms so quaint and courtly, and so full of generous appreciation of their interest in Oliver, that Mr. Slade, equally appreciative, had worn it into ribbons in showing it to his friends as a model of style and chirography.

Remembering his mother's wishes, and in appreciation of his employer's courtesy, he had kept up this intimacy with the Slade family until an unfortunate catastrophe had occurred, which, while it did not affect his welcome at their house, ruined his pleasure while there.

Mr. Slade had invited Oliver to dinner one rainy night, and, being too poor to pay for a cab, Oliver, in attempting to cross Broadway. had stepped into a mud puddle a foot deep. He must either walk back and change his shoes and be late for dinner, an unpardonable offence, or he must keep on and run his chances of cleaning them in the dressing-room. There was no dressing-room available, as it turned out, and the fat English butler had to bring a wet cloth out into the hall (oh! how he wished for Malachi!) and get down on his stiff knees and wipe away vigorously before Oliver could present himself before his hostess, the dinner in the meantime getting cold and the guests being kept waiting. Oliver could never look at those shoes after that without shivering.

This incident had kept him at home for a time and had made him chary of exposing himself to similar mortifications. His stock of clothes at best was limited, especially his shoes, and as the weather continued bad and the streets impassable, he preferred waiting for clearer skies and safer walking. So he spent his nights in his room, crooning over the coke fire with Fred, or all alone if Fred were at the Academy, drawing from the cast.

On these nights he would begin to long for

Kennedy Square. He had said nothing yet about returning, even for a day's visit. He knew how his mother felt about it, and he knew how he had seen her struggle to keep the interest paid up on the mortgage and to meet the daily necessities of the house. The motor was still incomplete, she wrote him, and success was as far off as ever. The mortgage had again been extended and the note renewed, this time for a longer term, owing to some friend's interest in the matter whose name she could not learn. She therefore felt no uneasiness on that score, although there were still no pennies which could be spared for Oliver's travelling expenses, even if he could get leave of absence from his emplovers.

At these times, as he sat alone in his garret room, Malachi's chuckle, without cause or reminder, would suddenly ring in his ears, or some low strain from his father's violin or a soft note from Nathan's flute would float through his brain. "Dear Uncle Nat," he would break out, speaking aloud and springing from his chair,

"I wish I could hear you to-night."

His only relief while in these moods was to again seize his pen and pour out his heart to his mother or to his father, or to Miss Clendenning or old Mr. Crocker. Occasionally he would write

to Sue—not often — for that volatile young lady had so far forgotten Oliver as to leave his letters unanswered for weeks at a time. She was singing "Dixie," she told him in her last billetdoux, now a month old, and wondering whether Oliver was getting to be a Yankee, and whether he would be coming home with a high collar and his hair cut short and parted in the middle.

His father's letters in return did not lessen his gloom. "These agitators will destroy the country, my son, if they keep on," Richard had written in his last letter. "It is a sin against civilization to hold your fellow men in bondage, and that is why years ago I gave Malachi and Hannah and the others their freedom, but Virginia has unquestionably the right to govern her internal affairs without consulting Massachusetts, and that is what many of these Northern leaders do not or will not understand. I am greatly disturbed over the situation, and I sincerely hope your own career will not be affected by these troubles. As to my own affairs, all I can say is that I work early and late, and am out of debt." Poor fellow! He thought he was.

Oliver was sitting thus one night, his head in his hands, elbows on his knees, gazing into the smouldering coals of his grate, his favorite atti-

tude when his mind was troubled, when Fred, his face aglow, his big blue eyes dancing, threw wide the door and bounded in, bringing in his clothes the fresh, cool air of the night. He had been at work in the School of the Academy of Design, and had a drawing in chalk under his arm — a head of the young Augustus.

"What's the matter, Ollie? Got the blues?"

"No, Freddie, only thinking."

"What's her name? I'll go and see her and make it up. Out with it — do I know her?"

Oliver smiled faintly, examined the drawing for a moment, and handing it back to Fred, said sadly, "It's not a girl, Freddie, but I don't seem to get anywhere."

Fred threw the drawing on the bed and squeezed himself into the chair beside his chum, his arm around his neck.

"Where do you want to get, old man? What's the matter? Any trouble at the store?"

"No — none that I know of. But the life is so monotonous, Fred! You do what you love to do. I mark boxes all day till lunch-time, then I roll them out on the sidewalk and make out dray tickets till I come home. I 've been doing that all winter; I expect to be doing

it for years. That don't get me anywhere, does it? I hate the life more and more every day."

(Was our hero's old love of change again asserting itself, or was it only the pinching of that Chinese shoe which his mother in her anxiety had slipped on his unresisting foot, and which he was still wearing to please her? Or was it the upper pressure of some inherent talent,—some gift of his ancestors that would not down at his own bidding or that of his mother or anybody else's?)

"Somebody's got to do it, Ollie, and you are the last man hired," remarked Fred quietly. "What would you like to do?"

Oliver shifted himself in the crowded chair until he could look into his room-mate's eyes.

"Fred, old man," he answered, his voice choking, "I have n't said a word to you about it all the time I 've been here, for I don't like to talk about a thing that hurts me, and so I 've kept it to myself. Now I 'll tell you the truth just as it is. I don't want Mr. Slade's work nor anybody else's work. I don't like business, and never will. I want to paint, and I 'll never be happy until I do. That 's it, fair and square."

"Well, quit Slade, then, and come with me."

her I would see this through, and I will." As he spoke, the overdue mortgage and his mother's efforts to keep the interest paid passed in review before him.

Fred caught his breath. It astonished him, independent young Northerner as he was, to hear a full-grown man confess that his mother's apron-strings still held him up, but he made no comment.

"Why not try both?" he cried. "There's a place in the school alongside of me—we'll work together nights. It won't interfere with what you do down town. You'll get a good start, and when you have a day off in the summer you can do some outdoor work. Waller has told me a dozen times that you draw better than he did when he commenced. Come along with me."

This conversation, with the other incidents of the day, or rather that part of it which had reference to the Academy, was duly set forth in his next letter to his mother, not as an argument to gain her consent to his studying with Fred, for he knew it was the last thing she would agree to, but because it was his habit to tell her everything. It would show her, too, how good a fellow Fred was, and what an interest he took in his welfare. Her answer, three

days later, sent him bounding upstairs and into their room like a whirlwind.

"Read, Fred, read!" he cried. "I can go! Mother says she thinks it would be the best thing in the world for me. Here, clap your eyes on that," and Oliver held the letter out to Fred, his finger pointing to this passage: "I wish you would join Fred at the Academy. Now that you have a regular business that occupies your mind, and are earning your living, I have no objection to your studying drawing or learning any other accomplishment. You work hard all day, and this will rest you."

The cramped foot was beginning to spread! The Chinese shoe had lost its top button.

XII

AROUND THE MILO

STILL another new and far more bewildering world was opened to Oliver the night that he entered the cast room of the School of the National Academy of Design, and took his seat among the students.

The title of the institution, high sounding as it was, not only truthfully expressed the objects and purposes of its founders, but was woefully exact in the sense of its being national; for outside the bare walls of these rooms there was hardly a student's easel to be found the country over.

And such forlorn, desolate rooms, up two flights of dusty stairs, in a rickety, dingy loft off Broadway, within a short walk of Union Square, — an auction-room on the ground floor and a barroom in the rear! The largest of these rooms was used for the annual exhibition of the Academicians and their associates, and the smaller ones were given over to the students; one, a better lighted apartment, being filled

with the usual collection of casts, — the Milo, the Fighting Gladiator, Apollo Belvidere, Venus de Medici, etc., etc.; the other being devoted to the uses of the life class and its models. Not the nude. Whatever may have been done in the studios, in the class-room it was always the draped model that posed, — the old woman who washed for a living on the top floor, or one of her chubby children or buxom daughters, or perhaps the pedler who strayed in to sell his wares and left his head behind him on ten different canvases and in as many different positions.

The casts themselves were backed up against the walls; some facing the windows for lights and darks, and others pushed toward the middle of the room, where the glow of the gas-jets could accentuate their better points. The Milo, by right of divinity, held the centre position, she being beautiful from any point of sight, and available from any side. The Theseus and the Gladiator stood in the corners, affording space for the stools of two or three students and their necessary easels. Scattered about on the coarse, whitewashed walls were hung the smaller lifecasts, - fragments of the body, an arm, leg, or hand, or sections of a head; and tucked in between could be found cheap lithographic productions of the work of the students and professors

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of the Paris and Düsseldorf schools. The gaslights under which the students worked at night were hooded by cheap paper shades of the students' own fashioning, and the lower sashes of the windows were smeared with whitewash or covered with newspapers, to concentrate the light. During working hours the drawing-boards were propped upon rude easels, or slanted on overturned chairs, the students sitting on threelegged stools.

A gentle-voiced, earnest, whole-souled old man, the one, only instructor, presided over this temple of art. He had devoted his whole life to the sowing of figs and the reaping of thistles, and in his old age was just beginning to see the shoots of a new art forcing their way through the quickening clay of American civilization. Once in a while, as assistants in this almost hopeless task, there would stray into his class-room some of the painters who, unconsciously, were founding a national art, and in honor of whom a grateful nation will one day search the world over for marble white enough on which to perpetuate their memories: men as distinct in their aims, methods, and results as was that other group of unknown and despised immortals, starving together at that very time in a French village across the sea; and men,

too, equally deserving of the esteem and gratitude of their countrymen.

Oliver knew the names of these distinguished visitors to the Academy, as did all the other members of the Skylarks, and he knew their work. The pictures of George Inness, Sanford Gifford, Kensett, McEntee, Hart, Eastman Johnson, Hubbard, Church, Casilaer, Whittredge, and the others had been frequently discussed around the piano on the top floor at Miss Teetum's, and their merits and supposed demerits often hotly contested. He had met Kensett once at the house of Mr. Slade, and McEntee had been pointed out to him as he left the theatre one night, but few of the others had ever crossed his path.

Of the group Gifford appealed to him most. One golden "Venice" of the painter, which hung in a picture store, always delighted him—a stretch of the Lagoon with a cluster of butterfly sails and a far-away line of palaces, towers, and domes lying like a string of pearls on the horizon. There was another of Kensett's, a point of rocks thrust out like a mailed hand into a blue sea; and a McEntee of October woods, all brown and gold; but the Gifford he had never forgotten; nor will any one else who has seen it.

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No wonder, then, that all his life he remembered that particular night when a slender, dark-haired man in loose gray clothes sauntered into the class-room and moved around among the easels, giving a suggestion here and a word of praise there, for that was the night on which Professor Cummings touched our young hero's shoulder and said, "Mr. Gifford likes your drawing very much, Mr. Horn," a word of praise which, as he wrote to Crocker, steadied his uncertain fingers "as nothing else had ever done."

The students in his school were from all stations in life: young and old, all of them poor, and most of them struggling along in kindred professions and occupations, - engravers, house painters, lithographers, and wood carvers. Two or three were sign painters. One of these, a big-boned, blue-eyed young fellow, who drew in charcoal from the cast at night, and who sketched the ships in the harbor during the day, came from Kennedy Square, or rather from one of the side streets leading out of it. There can still be found over the door of what was once his shop a weather-beaten example of his skill in gold letters, the product of his own hand. Above the signature is, or was some ten years since, a small decorative panel showing a strip

of yellow sand, a black dot of a boat, and a line of blue sky, so true in tone and sure in composition that when Mr. Crocker first passed that way and stood astounded before it—as did Robinson Crusoe over Friday's footprint—he was so overjoyed to find another artist besides himself in the town, that he turned into the shop, and finding only a young mechanic at work, said,—

"Go to New York, young man, and study. You have a career before you."

The old landscape painter was a sure prophet; little pen and ink sketches bearing the initials of this same sign painter now sell for more than their weight in gold, while his larger canvases on the walls of our museums and galleries hold their place beside the work of the marine painters of our own and other times, and will for many a day to come.

This exile from Kennedy Square had been the first man to shake Oliver's hand the night he entered the cast room. Social distinctions had no place in this atmosphere, — it was the fellow who in his work came closest to the curve of the shoulder or to the poise of the head who proved, in the eyes of his fellow students, his possession of an ancestry; but the ancestry was one that skipped over the Mayflower and

went straight back to the great Michael and Rembrandt.

"I'm Jack Bedford, the sign painter," he said heartily. "You and I come from the same town," and as they grasped each other's hands a new friendship was added to Oliver's rapidly

increasing list.

Oliver's seat was next to Fred, with Jack Bedford on his right. He had asked to join this group, not only because he wanted to be near his two friends, but because he wanted still more to be near the Milo. He had himself selected a certain angle of the head because he had worked from that same point of sight with Mr. Crocker, and it had delighted him beyond measure when the professor allowed him to place his stool so that he could almost duplicate his earlier drawing. His ambition was to get into the life class, and the quickest road, he knew, lay through a good cast drawing. Every night for a week, therefore, he had followed the wonderful lines of the Milo's beautiful body, which seemed to grow with warmth under the flare of the overhanging gas-jets.

These favored life students occupied the room next to the casts. Mother Mulligan, in full regalia of apron and broom, often sat there as a model. Oliver had recognized her portrait at

once; so can any one else who looks over the earlier studies of half the painters of the time.

"Oh, it's you, is it?" Mrs. Mulligan herself had cried when she met Oliver in the hall, "The young gentleman that saved Miss Margaret's dog! She'll be here next week herself. She's gone home for a while up into the mountains, where her old father and mother live. I told her many times about ye, and she'll be that pleased to meet ye, now that you're wan of us."

It was delightful to hear her accent the "wan." Mother Mulligan always thought the institution rested on her broad shoulders, and that the students were part of her family.

The old woman could also have told Oliver of Margaret's arrival at the school, and of the impression which she, the first and only girl student, made on the night she took her place before an easel. But of the reason of her coming Mrs. Mulligan could have told nothing, nor why Margaret had been willing to exchange the comforts of a home among the New Hampshire hills for the narrow confines of a third-story back room, with Mrs. Mulligan as housekeeper and chaperon.

Fred knew all the details, of course, and how it had all come about. How a cousin of Marga-

ret's who lived on a farm near her father's had one day, years before, left his plough standing in the furrow and apprenticed himself to a granite cutter in the next town. How later on he had graduated in gravestones, and then in basreliefs, and finally had won a medal in Rome for a figure of "Hope," which was to mark the grave of a millionaire at home. How when the statue was finished, ready to be set up, this cousin had come to Brookfield, wearing a squarecut beard, straight-out mustaches with needle points, and funny shoes with square toes. How the girl had been disposed to laugh at him until he had told her stories of the wonderful cities beyond the sea and of his life among the painters and sculptors; then she showed him her own drawings, searching his face anxiously with her big eyes. How he had been so astounded and charmed by their delicacy and truth, that he had pleaded with her father, an obstinate old Puritan, to send her to New York to study, which the old man refused point-blank to do, only giving his consent at the last when her brother John, who had been graduated from Dartmouth and knew something of the outside world, had joined his voice to that of her mother and her own. How when she at last entered the class-room of the Academy the students had

looked askance at her; the usual talk had ceased, and for a time there had been an uncomfortable restraint everywhere, until the men found her laughing quietly at their whispered jokes about her. After that the "red-headed girl in blue gingham," as she was called, had become, by virtue of that spirit of *camaraderie* which a common pursuit develops, "one of us" in spirit as well as in occupation.

Fred had described it all to Oliver, and every night when Oliver came in from the hall, his eyes had wandered over the group of students in the hope of seeing the strange person. A girl studying art, or anything else for that matter, seemed to him to be as incongruous as for a boy to learn dressmaking or for a woman to open a barber shop. He knew her type, he said to himself: she would be thin and awkward, with an aggressive voice that would jar on the stillness of the room. And she would believe in the doctrines of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, a name never mentioned by his mother except apologetically and in a low voice, and when she became older she would address meetings, and become conspicuous in church, and have her name printed in the daily papers.

Our hero's mind was intent upon these phases of character, always to be found, of course, in a

girl who would unsex herself to the extent that Miss Grant had done, when one night a rich, full, well-modulated voice sounding over his shoulder said.—

"Excuse me, but Mother Mulligan tells me that you are Mr. Horn, Fred Stone's friend. I want to thank you for taking care of my poor Juno. It was very good of you. I am Margaret Grant."

She had approached him without his seeing her. He turned quickly to accost her, and immediately lost so much of his breath that he could only stammer his thanks, and the hope that Juno still enjoyed the best of health. But the deep brown eyes did not waver after acknowledging his reply, nor did the smile about the mouth relax.

"And I'm so glad you've come at last," she went on. "Fred has told me how you wanted to draw and could n't. I know something myself of what it is to hunger after a thing and not get it."

He was on his feet now, the bit of charcoal still between his fingers, his shirt-cuff rolled back to give his hand more freedom. His senses were coming back, too, and there was buoyancy as well as youth in his face.

"Yes, I do love it," said Oliver, and his eyes wandered over her wonderful hair, that looked

like brown gold illumined by slants of sunshine, and then rested for an instant on her eyes. "I drew with old Mr. Crocker at home, but we only had one cast, just the head of the Milo, and I was the only pupil. Here everything helps me. What are you at work on, Miss Grant?"

"I'm doing the Milo too; my seat is right in front of yours. Oh! what a good beginning," and she bent over his drawing-board. "Why, this can't be your first week!" and she scanned it closely. "One minute — a little too full under the chin, is n't it?" She picked up a piece of chalk, and pointed to the shaded lines, looking first with half-closed eyes at the full-sized cast before them, and then at the drawing.

"Yes, I think you're right," said Oliver, studying the cast also with half closed-eyes. "How will that do?" and he smudged the shadow with his finger-tip.

"Just right," she answered. "How well you have the character of the face! Is n't she lovely! I know of nothing so beautiful. There is such a queenly, womanly, self-poised simplicity about her."

Oliver thought so too, and said so with his eyes, only it was of a face framed in brown gold that he was thinking, and not of one of white

plaster. He was touched too by the delicate way in which she had commended his drawings. It was the "woman" in her that pleased him, just as it had been in Sue, — that subtle, dominating influence which our fine gentleman could never resist.

He shifted his stool a little to one side so that he could see her the better, unobserved, while she was arranging her seat and propping up her board. He noticed that although her face was tanned by the weather, her head was set on a neck of singular whiteness. Underneath, where the back hair was tucked up, his eye caught some delicate filmy curls, which softened the line between her throat and head and shone in the light like threads of gold. The shoulders sloped and the whole fulness of her figure tapered to a waist firmly held by a leather belt. A wholesome girl, he thought to himself, and good to look at, and with a certain rhythmic grace about her movements.

Her crowning glory, though, was her hair, which was parted over her forehead and caught in a simple twist behind. As the light fell upon it he observed again how full it was of varying tones, like those found in the crinklings of a satin gown, — yellow gold one minute and dark brown the next. Oliver wondered how long this

marvellous hair might be, and whether it would reach to the floor if it should burst its fastenings, and whether Sir Peter Lely would have loved it too, could he have seen this flood of gold bathing her brow and shoulders.

He found it delightful to work within a few feet of her, silent as they had to be, for much talking was discountenanced by the professor: often hours passed without any sound being heard in the room but that of the scraping of the chairs on the bare floor or the shifting of an easel.

Two or three times during the evening the old professor emerged from his room and overlooked his drawing, patiently pointing out the defects, and as patiently correcting them. He was evidently impressed with Oliver's progress, for he remarked to Miss Grant, in a low voice, —

"The new student draws well; he is doing first-rate," and 'passed on. Oliver caught the expression of satisfaction on the professor's face, and interpreted it as in some way applying to his work, although he did not catch the words.

The old man rarely had to criticise Margaret's work. The suggestions made to her came oftener from the students than from the professor himself or any one of the visiting critics. In these criticisms, not only of her own work, but of

the others, every one took part, each leaving his stool and helping in the discussion, when the work of the night was over. Fred's more correct eye, for instance, would be invaluable to Jack Bedford, the ex-sign-painter, who was struggling with the profile of the Gladiator; or Margaret, who could detect at a glance the faintest departure from the lines of the original, would shorten a curve on Oliver's drawing, or he in turn would advise her about the depth of a shadow or the spot for a high light.

As the nights went by and Oliver studied her the closer, the New England girl became all the more inexplicable to him. She was, he could not but admit, like no other woman he had ever met; certainly not in his present surroundings. She really seemed to belong to some fabled race - one of the Amazons, or Rhine maidens, or Norse queens for whom knights couched their lances. It was useless to compare her to any one of the girls about Kennedy Square, for she had nothing in common with any one of them. Was it because she was unhappy among her own people that she had thus exiled herself from her home, or had some love affair blighted her life? Or could it be, as Fred had suggested, that she was willing to undergoall these discomforts and privations simply for love of her art? As this

possible solution of the vexing problem became established in his mind, with the vision of Margaret herself before him, the blood mounted to his cheeks and an uncontrollable thrill of enthusiasm swept over him. He could forgive her anything if this last motive had really controlled and shaped her life.

Had he seen the more closely and with prophetic vision, he would have discerned, in this Norse queen with the golden hair, the mother of a long line of daughters, who, in the days to follow, would hang their triumphant shields beside those of their brothers, winning equal recognition in salon and gallery, and conferring equal honor on their country. But Oliver's vision was no keener than that of any one else about him. It was only the turn of Margaret's head that caught the young student's eye and the wealth of her brown-gold hair. With the future he had no concern.

What attracted him most of all in this woman who had violated all the known traditions of Kennedy Square was a certain fearlessness of manner — an independence, a perfect ingenuousness, and a freedom from any desire to interest the students in herself. When she looked at any one of them, it was never from under drooping eyelids, as Sue would have done, nor with that

coquettish, alluring glance to which he had always been accustomed. She looked straight at them with unflinching eyes that said, "I can trust you, and will." He had never seen exactly that look except in the portrait of his uncle's grandmother by Sir Peter Lely—the picture he had always loved. Strange to say, too, the eyes of the portrait were Margaret's eyes, and so was the color of the hair.

No vexed problems entered Margaret's head regarding the very engaging young gentleman who sat behind her stool. He merely represented to her another student — that was all; the little band was small enough, and she was glad to see the new ones come. She noticed, it is true, certain unmistakable differences, -a peculiar, soft cadence in his voice as the words slipped from his lips without their final g's; a certain deference to herself, standing until she regained her seat, an attention which she attributed at first to embarrassment over his new surroundings and to his desire to please. She noticed, too, a certain grace in his movements, - a grace that attracted her, especially in the way with which he used his hands, and in the way in which he threw his head up when he laughed, - but even these differences ceased to interest her after the first night of their meeting.

But it did not occur to her that he came from any different stock than the others about her, or that his blood might or might not be a shade bluer than her own. What had really impressed her more than anything else—and this only flashed into her mind while she was looking in the glass one night at her own—were his big white teeth, white as grains of corn, and the cleanliness of his hands and nails. She liked these things about him. Some of the fingers that rested on her drawing-board were often more like clothes-pins than fingers, and shocked her not a little; some, too, were stained with acids, and one or more with printer's ink that no soap could remove.

Before the evening was over Oliver became one of the class-room appointments, — a young man who sat one stool behind her and was doing fairly well with his first attempt, and who would some day be able to make a creditable drawing if he had patience and application.

At the beginning of the second week a new student appeared, or rather an old one, who had been laid up at home with a cold. When Oliver arrived he found him in Margaret's seat, his easel standing where hers had been. He had a full-length drawing of the Milo—evidently the work of days—nearly finished on

his board. Oliver was himself a little ahead of time — ahead of either Margaret or Fred — and had noticed the newcomer when he entered, the room being nearly empty. Jack Bedford was already at work.

"Horn," Jack cried, and beckoned to Oliver, see the beggar in Miss Grant's seat. Won't there be a jolly row when she comes in?"

Margaret entered a moment later, her portfolio under her arm, and stood taking in the situation. Then she walked straight to her former seat, and said in a firm but kindly tone,—

"This is my place, sir. I've been at work here for a week. You see my drawing is nearly done."

The young man looked up. He toiled all day in a lithographer's shop, and these precious nights in the loft were his only glimpses of happiness. He sat without his coat, his shirt-sleeves liberally smeared with the color-stains of his trade.

"Well, it's my place, too. I sat here a week before I was taken sick," he said in a slightly indignant tone, looking into Margaret's face in astonishment.

"But if you did," continued Margaret, "you see I am nearly through. I can't take another seat, for I'll lose the angle. I can finish in an

hour if you will please give me this place tonight. You can work just as well by sitting a few feet farther along."

The lithographer, without replying, turned from her impatiently, bent over his easel, picked up a fresh bit of charcoal, and corrected a line on the Milo's shoulder. So far as he was concerned the argument was closed.

Margaret stood patiently. She thought at first he was merely adding a last touch to his drawing before granting her request.

"Will you let me have the seat?" she asked.

"No," he blurted out. He was still bending over his drawing, his eyes fixed on the work. He did not even look up. "I'm going to stay here until I finish. You know the rules as well as I do. I would n't take your seat; what do you want to take mine for?" There was no animosity in his voice. He spoke as if announcing a fact.

The words had hardly left his lips when there came the sound of a chair being quickly pushed back, and Oliver stood beside Margaret. His eyes were flashing; his right shirt-cuff was rolled back, the bit of charcoal still between his fingers. Every muscle of his body was tense with anger. Margaret's quick instinct took in

the situation at a glance. She saw Oliver's wrath, and she knew its cause.

"Don't, Mr. Horn, please — please!" she cried, putting up her hand. "I'll begin another drawing. I see now that I took his seat when he was away, although I did n't know it."

Oliver stepped past her. "Get up, sir," he said, "and give Miss Grant her seat. What do you mean by speaking so to a lady?"

The apprentice, his name was Judson, raised his eyes quickly, took in Oliver's tense, muscular figure standing over him, and said, with a contemptuous wave of the hand,—

"Young feller, you go and cool off somewhere, or I'll tell the professor. It's none of your business. I know the rules and "—

He never finished the sentence—not that anybody heard. He was floundering on the floor, an overturned easel and drawing-board lying across his body, Oliver standing over him with his fists tightly clenched.

"I'll teach you how to behave to a lady." The words sounded as if they came from between closed teeth. "Here's your chair, Miss Grant," and with a slight bow he placed the chair before her and resumed his seat with as much composure as if he had been in his mother's drawing-room in Kennedy Square.

Margaret was so astounded that for a moment she could not speak. Then her voice came back to her. "I don't want it," she cried in a half-frightened way, the tears starting in her eyes. "It was never mine — I told you so. Oh, what have you done?"

Never since the founding of the school had there been such a scene. The students jumped from their chairs and crowded about the group. The life class, which were at work in another room, startled by the uproar, swarmed out eager to know what had happened and why, and who, and what for. Old Mother Mulligan, who had been posing for the class, with a cloak about her fat shoulders and a red handkerchief binding up her head, rushed over to Margaret, thinking she had been hurt in some way, until she saw the student on the floor, still panting and half dazed from the effect of Oliver's blow. Then she fell on her knees beside him.

At this instant Professor Cummings entered, and a sudden hush fell upon the room. Judson, with the help of Mother Mulligan's arm, had picked himself up, and would have made a rush at Oliver had not big Jack Bedford stopped him.

"Who's to blame for this?" asked the professor, looking from one to the other.

Oliver rose from his seat.

"This man insulted Miss Grant, and I threw him out of her chair," he answered quietly.

"Insulted you!" cried the professor in surprise, and he turned to Margaret. "What did

he say?"

"I never said a word to her," whined Judson, straightening his collar. "I told her the seat was mine, and so it is. That was n't in-

sulting her."

"It's all a mistake, Professor. Mr. Horn did not understand," protested Margaret. "It was his seat, not mine. He began his drawing first. I did n't know it when I commenced mine. I told Mr. Horn so."

"Why did you strike him?" asked the professor, and he turned and faced Oliver.

"Because he had no business to speak to her as he did. She is the only lady we have among us, and every man in the class ought to remember it, and every man has since I 've been here except this one."

There was a slight murmur of applause. Judson's early training had been neglected as far as his manners went, and he was not popular.

The professor looked searchingly into Oliver's eyes, and a flush of pride in the boy's pluck tinged his pale cheeks. He had once thrown a fellow student out of a window in Munich him-

self for a similar offence, and old as he was he had never forgotten it.

"You come from the South, Mr. Horn, I hear," he said in a gentler voice, "and you are all a hot-tempered race, and often do foolish things. Judson meant no harm, —he says so and Miss Grant says so. Now you two shake hands and make up. We are trying to learn to draw here, not to batter each other's heads."

Oliver's eyes roved from one to the other; he was too astonished to make further reply. He had only done what he knew every other man around Kennedy Square would have done under similar circumstances, and what any other woman would have thanked him for. Why was everybody here against him, even the girl herself! What sort of people were these who would stand by and see a woman insulted and make no defence or outcry? He could not have looked his father in the face again, nor Sue, nor any one else in Kennedy Square, if he had failed to protect her.

For a moment he hesitated, his eyes searching each face. He had hoped that some one who had witnessed the outrage would come forward and uphold his act. When no voice broke the stillness he crossed the room, and taking the lithographer's hand, extended rather sullenly,

answered quietly, "If Miss Grant is satisfied, I am," and peace was once more restored.

Margaret sharpened her charcoals and bent over her drawing. She was so agitated she could not trust herself to touch its surface. "If I am satisfied," she kept repeating to herself. The words, somehow, seemed to carry a reproach with them. "Why should n't I be satisfied? I have no more rights in the room than the other students about me; that is, I thought I had n't until I heard what he said. How foolish for him to cause all this fuss about nothing, and make me so conspicuous!"

But even as she said the words to herself she remembered Oliver's tense figure and the look of indignation on his face. She had never been accustomed to seeing men take up the cudgels for women. There had been no opportunity, perhaps, nor cause; but even if there had been, she could think of no one whom she had ever met who would have done as much for her just because she was a woman.

A little sob, which she could not have explained to herself, welled up to her throat. Much as she gloried in her own self-reliance, she suddenly and unexpectedly found herself exulting in a quality heretofore unknown to her, that quality which had compelled an almost total

stranger to take her part. Then the man himself! How straight and strong and handsome he was as he stood looking at Judson; and then the uplifted arm, the quick spring, and, best of all, the calm, graceful way in which he had handed her the chair! She could not get the picture out of her mind. Last, she remembered with a keen sense of pleasure the chivalrous look in his face when he held out his hand to the man who a moment before had received its full weight about his throat.

She had not regained mastery of herself even when she leaned across her drawing-board, pretending to be absorbed in her work. The curves of the Milo seemed in some strange way to have melted into the semblance of the outlines of other visions sunk deep in her soul since the days of her childhood, -visions which for years past had been covered over by the ice of a cold. hard, puritanical training, that had prevented any bubbles of sentiment from ever rising to the surface of her heart. As remembrances of these visions rushed through her mind, the halfdraped woman, with the face of the Madonna and the soul of the Universal Mother shining through every line of her beautiful body, no longer stood before her. It was a knight in glittering armor now, with drawn sword and visor

up, beneath which looked out the face of a beautiful youth aflame with the fire of a holy zeal. She caught the flash of the sun on his breastplate of silver, and the sweep of his blade, and heard his clarion voice sing out. And then again, as she closed her eyes, this calm, lifeless cast became a gallant, blue-eyed prince, who knelt beside her and kissed her finger-tips, his doffed plumes trailing at her feet.

When the band of students were leaving the rooms that night, Margaret called Oliver to her side, and extending her hand, said, with a direct simplicity that carried conviction in every tone of her voice, and in which no trace of her former emotions were visible,—

"I hope you'll forgive me, Mr. Horn. I'm all alone here in this city, and I have grown so accustomed to depending on myself that perhaps I failed to understand how you felt about it. I am very grateful to you. Good-night."

She had turned away before he could do more than express his regret over the occurrence. He wanted to follow her, to render her some assistance, to comfort her in some way. It hurt him to see her go out alone into the night. He wished he might offer his arm, escort her home, make some atonement for the pain he had caused her. But there was a certain proud

poise of the head and swift glance of the eye which held him back.

While he stood undecided whether to break through her reserve and join her, he saw Mrs. Mulligan come out of the basement, stop a passing stage, and, helping Margaret in, take the seat beside her.

"I am glad she does not go out alone," he said to himself, and turned away.

END OF VOL. I.







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